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HORÆ CATECHETICÆ:

AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

DUTY AND ADVANTAGES

OF

PUBLIC CATECHISING IN CHURCH,

BY W. S. GILLY, M.A.

PREBENDARY OF DURHAM;

EDITED,

WITH ADDITIONAL MATTER,

BY

GEORGE WASHINGTON DOANE, D.D.,

BISHOP OF NEW JERSEY.

O, for the ancient and primitive ordinance of Catechising!—*Thomas Fuller.*

PHILADELPHIA:

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M DCCC XXXVI.

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SURE I AM, CATECHISING, IN ITS ORIGINAL, TRUE SENSE, IMPLIES SOMETHING MORE THAN A BARE RUNNING OVER AN OLD FORM, THOUGH THAT CONSISTS OF PROPER QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, AND CONTAINS WHATSOEVER IS NEEDFUL EITHER TO BELIEF OR PRACTICE.—BP. EDMUND LAW.

J. L. POWELL:
Missionary Press, Burlington N. J.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE AMERICAN EDITION.

It is a vulgar notion, and may be a vulgar error, that wheresoever, in the realm of nature, a poison groweth, there groweth near unto it a certain antidote. It is at least a touching attestation to the habitual faith of the common people in the providence of God, and an expressive tribute to his ever present and prevailing goodness. But whatever truth there be in this doctrine of physical compensations, in the dealings which God hath with men as moral agents, there is certainly something analogous to it. Out of the sorest evils which our fallen nature brings upon itself, there ever springeth up a healing retribution. Excess of license chastens and reclaims itself. Rebellion weaves a scorpion scourge that whips us back to God. The stern conviction which experience ever brings of the error of our own ways, and of the folly of our own devices, is both the motive and preparative of that return to a better mind, without which peace and comfort are forever hopeless. So doth the wrath of man redound to his Creator's glory. So, in mercy to our souls, doth he restrain the fierce remainder.

Are there not manifested in our day clear indications of this recuperative process of God's providence, in the instinctive readiness with which men now begin to turn from vague and barren generalization, from the heats of artificial excitement, or the shallow pools of superficial nonsense, to the cool, green pastures, to the deep, still waters, of God's word,—and to those slow, and patient, and pains-taking methods, by which alone they can be found? The age which just precedes us, and of which ourselves are part, has been, it must be owned, an age of loud and liberal profession, and, we fear it must as

well be owned, of scant and sparing practice. The apostle sketches it in few and happy words, when, writing to the first Ephesian bishop, he describes certain persons of that day, as "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." It is not want of means. For it is a day of Bibles and of schools—the dynasty of the Press—the age of light. It is not want of stimulus to effort. The very atmosphere is excitement. The world is in commotion. The human family have gone, as it were, into Committee of the whole, for "the diffusion of" what is called, "useful knowledge." "Many" are seen in all directions to "run to and fro;" and yet "knowledge" —true, sound, substantial, saving knowledge—"is" *not* "increased." We have been looking back with a pity that was half contempt upon our poor groping ancestors, when, in integrity, and piety, and modesty, and dignity, and courtesy, we are far out of sight behind them. We have congratulated the world, and plumed ourselves, upon "the march of mind," when, in good truth, so far as the strong foundations, the substantial safeguards, and the crowning ornaments of social life are thought of, we have been stationary, if indeed we have not retrograded. It is a cheering symptom, an olive branch of hope, a token that the Lord God hath not "cast off forever," that, in the midst of this prevailing self-delusion, misgivings have arisen, that all is not so well as it appears. There is an enquiry for "first principles." There is a searching after "the old paths." There is a general persuasion that "the old is better." A revival, at least in part, is now in progress, of the methods of primitive instruction and, we will yet hope, of the measures of primitive devotion. The Church has taken into her own hands, what she never should have delegated, the high trust, to "preach the Gospel to every creature." The plan of systematic charity, on principle, finds universal and substantial favour. The ancient institution of public catechising is revived with great acceptance. Are not these encouraging "signs of the times?" Is not God showing "some token upon us for good?" May we not implore him, with renewed confidence, still to "revive his work?" "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the praise!"

It is in the hope of contributing something to the accomplishment

of these happy presages of advancing knowledge and increasing piety, that the present republication is attempted. With the thoughtful and the good, it can require neither apology nor argument. The attempt to improve the young is one which among them will always meet with universal favour. All know that if the fountains be not pure, the streams must be corrupt. All are aware that if men hope to reap in summer, they must plough and sow in spring. All agree that the hope of the Church, that the hope of the world, is in the young. How vainly, if they be not early taught to seek the Lord! How vainly, if Christian parents do not bring them up in his nurture and admonition—if Christian pastors feed not Christian lambs with "food convenient" for them!

It would be out of place to enter here into any large discussion of the merits of public catechising. In the Charge, which follows, the subject is considered at some length. In Mr. Gilly's book there are presented useful hints and happy illustrations for those who seriously desire to adopt and make effectual the primitive institution. The author has not undertaken, it will at once be seen, a regular treatise. He has done what is likely, we imagine, to be more useful—thrown together in an easy and natural way the results of his own experience; and thus taken by the hand, as it were, any who might consent to walk with him in the path which he has found so pleasant and so profitable. He has wisely deemed it better to write a book which would set men to thinking for themselves, than to attempt to reason out the subject for them. His little volume will be found, to use a phrase of Aristotle's, full of "the seeds of things." They will take root, we trust, and grow, and bear rich fruit, in many minds. At its first appearance it attracted much attention. Its republication in this country has been much desired. It is now attempted, in the hope—which may God please to grant!—that it may add something to the wholesome impulse, which is now working in the minds of Christian men, toward sounder methods of instruction in the faith and practice of the Gospel, and which will not fail to lead, if he vouchsafe the graces of his Holy Spirit, to larger attainments in holiness, and to higher elevations of piety.

What may be the cause why so much cloth so soon changeth colour? It is because it was never wet wadded, which giveth the fixation to a colour, and setteth it in the cloth.

What may be the reason why so many nowadays are carried about with every wind of doctrine, even to scour every point in the compass round about? Surely it is because they were never well catechised in the principles of religion.—Thomas Fuller.

THE CHURCH'S CARE FOR LITTLE CHILDREN:

Bishop Doane's Second Charge

TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW JERSEY.

M DCCC XXXVI.

'Tis a pity that people dont look at their Catechism sometimes when they are grown up: for it is full as good for men and women as it is for children; nay better: for though the answers contained in it are intended for children to repeat, yet the duties enjoined in it are intended for men and women to put in practice. It is, if I may so speak, the very grammar of Christianity, and of our Church; and they whounderstand every part of their Catechism thoroughly, will not be ignorant of any thing which a plain Christian need to know.

HANNAH MORE.

CHARGE.

My brethren of the Clergy,

I suppose that if from all the sacred book that sentence should be chosen which would find with human hearts the fullest acceptation, it would be these words of Jesus Christ,—"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." And I am persuaded, in like manner, that if a single aspect or provision of the Church should be selected, to establish the conviction that she came from God, and was devised for man, that would be taken which presents her, as the Spouse of Christ, training the children of her Lord, in holiness and piety, for their inheritance of glory. It follows, by a necessary consequence, that if we, my reverend brethren, would most effectually do honour to the Master whom we serve, and most essentially promote the welfare of the souls entrusted to our care, we must have ever in our hearts the sense of our relation to the young, and labour constantly, with diligence, fidelity and prayer, to be approved of Jesus, by the test which he proposed to Peter, —"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? Feed my lambs."

It was the purpose of the Primary Charge to state and urge "the edification of the Church, for the salvation of souls," as "the office and duty of the Christian Ministry." It seemed to me the best improvement of the occasion which brought us first together, as fellow-servants in the

same household of the common faith, to state thus generally the objects and the nature of our sacred calling—the end at which we aim, the means by which we seek it, the faithful efforts, fervent prayers, sincere desires, to which the Lord assures his blessing, approval here, and "life for evermore." Of a subject so extensive, the discussion, of necessity, was partial. An outline only could be given, to be filled up and finished, as occasion should demand, and God permit. Spared by his gracious providence, through three years more, the period has arrived, at which "it is deemed proper," in the judgment of the Church,* "unless prevented by a reasonable cause," that I again address you in "a Charge." In proceeding to take up the details of that great subject, which could then be treated only in the mass, I select for present consideration the attractive feature which has just been specified—THE CHURCH'S CARE FOR "LITTLE CHILDREN"—and I ask your patient attention, reverend brethren, while, from an examination of her beautiful and merciful provisions, I develope her fidelity and our responsibility.

I. The Church is faithful to her Lord in the care she takes for "little children"—

To bring them to him in Infant Baptism;

To train them up for him, in the instructions of the Catechism; and

To engage them to be his forever, in the rite of Confirmation.

II. In each of these, but most especially in the second of them—*the catechetical instruction of the young*—we derive, my reverend brethren, from her fidelity, the argu-

* Canon xxvi of the General Convention.

ment and admonition of our great responsibility.—God grant that we may so receive the Saviour, in the little children whom he loves, that, at the last, he may receive and own us all as faithful shepherds, and bestow on us the crown of life, "that fadeth not away."

i. The Church is faithful to her Lord in bringing "little children" to him, in Infant Baptism. I assume that she has right to do so. I undertake no defence of the grounds and reasons of this sacrament. I enter into no argument to prove that the Gospel is more comprehensive, more benevolent, more regardful of human infirmity, than the Law. I can conceive of no necessity to show that He, who, before his crucifixion, said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God," did not afterwards, when he had risen from the dead, exclude them from the initiatory rite of his religion, or forbid that they should "be born of water and of the Spirit," without which, he declared to Nicodemus, none can "enter into the kingdom of God." But, the authority conceded, how benign, how beautiful, how admirable for wisdom and benevolence, the uses of the ordinance! The infant sufferer is born into a world of sorrow and of sin, the heir at once of both. At the first threshold of his being, the Saviour's spouse comes out to meet him. She bears him to the bleeding Cross. She laves him in the fountain that forever flows from it, "for sin and for uncleanness." She signs him with its sacred sign. It is the signature of heaven upon his brow and in his heart. He is "born again" "of water and of the Spirit." He is the child of God, by "adoption and grace." He is an heir, through hope, of the eternal kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death of the only-begotten Son of God.

ii. When she has brought the little children thus to Christ, and made them by adoption members of the family of God, does she so leave them to the sinful bias of their fallen nature, and the corrupting influence of the wicked world? No! She bears them gently in a mother's arms. She clasps them fondly to a mother's breast. They are nurtured at her bosom. They are led by her hand. They are fed "with milk, and not with meat." There is ever in her ear the touching charge of her dear Lord, "take this child, and nurse him for me;" and the thought is ever foremost in her heart, to bring them up, whom He has so acknowledged, in His nurture and holy admonition. Admirable for this end, is the "Catechism" which she has provided,—a "form of sound words"—scripture, or strictly scriptural—the work of men, giants in intellect, and saints in piety—"so concise that the youngest child may learn it by heart, and yet so copious as to contain all things necessary to salvation."* Admirable is the provision which she has made, that this unrivalled summary of Christian faith and practice may not remain as a dead letter in the Prayer Book,—her rubrics requiring "the minister of every parish" "diligently upon Sundays and Holy-days" to "instruct or examine" the "children of his parish," "openly in the Church," in some part of it; and "all fathers, mothers, masters and mistresses" being enjoined to "cause their children, servants and apprentices, who have not learned their Catechism, to come to the Church, at the time appointed, and obediently to hear, and to be ordered by the minister†"—her canons directing that the ministers

* Jenkin on the Liturgy, pp. 225, 226.

† At the end of the Catechism.

who have charge of parishes "shall not only be diligent in instructing the children in the Catechism, but shall also by stated catechetical lectures and instruction be diligent in informing the youth and others in the doctrines, constitution, and liturgy of the Church"*—nay the very title of the Catechism, bearing with it this direct and positive injunction, "that is to say, an instruction to be learned by every person before he be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop."

iii. From the time that water first was sprinkled on the infant's brow, in the eternal, triune Name, this was the point to which all hearts were turned. Nearer than father or than mother† to the children of her Saviour's love, the Church, at that first moment of his Christian being, exhorted them, with the Godfathers and Godmothers, that they "take care" that he "be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and is sufficiently instructed in the other parts of the Church Catechism, set forth for that purpose." Through all his helpless infancy, and tender childhood, and ingenuous youth, this purpose was pursued. She knew how in a thousand ways the devious paths of life would tempt his inexperi-

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* Canon xxviii.

† In Gibson's Codex there is a remarkable illustration of this *more than maternal* interest of the Church for "little children," even in reference to their temporal safety. It is one of the Constitutions of Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the reign of Henry III, and is described in the margin thus—"Women shall be often admonished not to endanger their children." It bears date, A. D. 1236.—"*Ne fœminæ tenellos nocte opprimant, aliive periculo exponant.* Fœminæ commoneantur, ut pueros cante alant, et juxta se in nocte non collocarent, ne opprimantur. Solos juxta aquas sine custode non relinquant, et hoc omni die Dominica eis dicatur.

enced feet; and, with a track of light, she sketched for him that path of God's commandments, which is the single path of happiness and peace. She knew how deep the stain, how stern the yoke of sin; and she set up before him the mysterious Cross, and bid him turn to it, through faith in him who suffered there and died, and be redeemed and cleansed and live. She knew how tempting were the vanities of time, and how prevailing were the spells of earth; and she disclosed to him the joys of heaven, and its untold, unmingled and eternal glories, and exhorted him to set his affections there, and to have his treasure there and his home, that when his flesh and his heart shall fail, that may be his rest, and his "portion forever." In the light of such instructions, and by the power of such convictions, and with the comfort of such hopes, she has continued faithfully to *catechise** him in the way in which he ought to go: and now, "sufficiently instructed," its truths engraven on his heart, its precepts radiant in his life, he comes—no more "a babe in Christ," but grown in knowledge and in grace, the freeman of the Lord—to own before the Church the blessed bond sealed for him in his infancy, and in the imparted strength of God, the Sanctifier, to make his only and his best return, in yielding up himself, his soul and body to the service and the glory of his Saviour. He makes the solemn pledge. He kneels. He supplicates the heavenly grace. The hands of an apostle rest with holy prayers upon his head. And he is God's, and—so he be faithful unto death—God is, and will be, his forever.

Such is an outline, brief and rapid, of the beautiful and merciful provision by which the Church demonstrates and

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* Proverbs xxii. 6, *marginal reading*.

exerts her care for little children. How true to nature! How profound in philosophy! In piety how elevated! How instinct with charity! She "knows whereof we are made, and remembers that we are but dust." She sees that "of ourselves we are not sufficient to any good thing, as of ourselves." She bears in mind that for the race of man, so weak, so lost, so "dead in trespasses and sins," the Saviour died, that he might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify them to himself, as "a peculiar people, zealous of good works." A work so great cannot begin too soon. In such an enterprize, so mighty, so momentous, involving the eternal welfare of immortal souls, no moment must be lost. In resisting the whole bent and bias of an evil nature, reclaiming it from the control and thraldom of a power to which its will consents, transforming it—to use the only word which tells us all—creating it anew, so that from being sinful and loving sin, it shall become holy and in love with holiness, there must be need of time, and influence, and energy, and patience, and perseverance, and true love that never fails nor falters, nor grows weary,—and there needs above them and beyond them all, without which all the rest are vain, the sanctifying grace of the divine and holy Spirit. And she brings them all to bear—commences with the babe just born—secures for him, while worldlings would be caring for his fortune or his rank, a title to the purchase of the Cross, a portion in the heritage of heaven—lays her wait for the first dawning of his moral nature, and has prepared her pious hymn and holy prayer, to catch his infant heart*—

* And we may add, to hold his aged heart. See a beautiful instance of the impression and enjoyment of an infant hymn, at eighty-nine, in the appendix to Bishop Doane's sermon commemorative of Bishop White.

leads him gently by the hand to tender pastures and still waters—teaches him diligently, while he sits in the house and when he walks by the way, when he lies down and when he rises up—plies him with "line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept"—has patience with his weakness, with his slowness of heart, with his impatience, with his perversity, with his ingratitude—and supplicates, with fervent and continual prayers, the blessing of that gracious Spirit, who alone can bless her care, and crown her toil with increase.

And now, my reverend brethren, from the consideration of the Church's FAITHFULNESS in taking care of "little children," what can result, but the conviction of our great RESPONSIBILITY? In vain her merciful provision, without hearts that can appreciate and adopt it. In vain her admirable plans, if there be not willing hands, to carry them out, and to accomplish them. How shall we excuse ourselves, if, with such provision and such plans as we possess, we fail in our discharge of duty, and disappoint the Church's fondest hope? How, at the last great day, shall we endure it, when he who died for all the flock, as once he turned and looked on Peter, shall turn and look on us, and ask, at our hands, the lambs our negligence has lost? Constrained by these considerations, solicitous that in our pastoral office we may all approve ourselves good shepherds, that so the Saviour may be honoured, the Church edified, the sheep and lambs well fed, immortal souls reclaimed and sanctified and saved, and our account returned "with joy, and not with grief," I urge with utmost earnestness, as worthy of your best attention, and certain to repay your greatest efforts, *the catechetical instruction of the young;* and, in what follows of the present Charge, shall ask your

interest in the inquiry, which I now propose, as to its exact nature, its best method, and its manifold advantages.

1. The ancient and excellent institution of Catechising has suffered much depreciation from prevailing errors, as to its exact NATURE and intention. It has been supposed that these were both fulfilled when, now and then,—on rare occasions, as if an irksome task; when the whole congregation had retired, as if a work affording neither interest nor profit—its words, committed all to memory, were said by rote,—the questions asked exactly as they stand, no less, no more,—the answers rendered to the letter, and too often with but little more of understanding or of application than a well-instructed parrot might attain to. Who can wonder, if the institution, so administered, should suffer disrepute—if a duty discharged with so little interest, should be interesting to few or none—if an office, so reduced and dwindled to a bare and barren form, should fail of any useful purpose, and fall into neglect? In the beginning it was not so. By catechising, beyond a question, the faith and practice of the Gospel first gained an introduction among men. "It was principally by catechising," says Bishop Mant, on the authority of Hegesippus, "that the religion of Jesus was in a few years spread over the known world."* "By catechising, under Heaven," says Archdeacon Bayley, "was planted the apostolic Church; by catechising, the sound of the Gospel was sent forth into all lands."† "St. Paul's converts," says the present Bishop of Chester, "had all been instructed in the faith, as the custom was, catechetically."‡ "Clemens Alexandrinus,

* Notes on the Catechism.
† Charge to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Stow.
‡ J. B. Sumner, Apostolical Preaching, 4th London edition, p. 308.

Heraclias, afterwards Bishop of Alexandria, and Origen, were catechists; and the latter was so eminently successful in proceeding upon the golden rule, "line upon line and precept upon precept," that he not only achieved conversions among the more ignorant and uninformed, but among accomplished scholars."* It follows from these statements, and from many more that might be made, that catechetical instruction could not have been in earlier days that mere mechanical procedure which some appear to think it. "Sure I am," says Bishop Edmund Law, "catechising in its original, true sense, implies something more than a bare running over an old form, though that consist of proper questions and answers, and contain whatever is needful to believe or practice."†

The word, indeed, to go to the beginning, is a scriptural word, the practice is a scriptural practice. When St. Luke declares his purpose, in writing to Theophilus, to be, that he might know the certainty of those things wherein he was instructed, the literal meaning of the word is *catechised*.‡ When Apollos is spoken of as a man instructed in the way of the Lord, the literal sense is *catechised*.§ And when St. Paul declares that he had rather speak five words with his understanding that he might teach others, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue, the literal rendering is, that he might *catechise*‖ others. And accordingly, St. Cyril says expressly, that "St. Paul preached the Gospel from Rome to Illyria, and taught at Rome, by catechising."¶ If it be asked then, what we are to under-

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* Gilly's Horæ Catecheticæ, pp. 70, 1.
† Dissertation on the nature and necessity of Catechising.
‡ St. Luke i. 4. § Acts xviii. 25. ‖ 1 Corinthians xiv. 19.
¶ Catechesis, xvii, 16—quoted by Gilly, p. 66.

stand precisely by this term, we answer, in the words of Clement of Alexandria, specially this,—"the knowledge of religion first delivered to the ignorant by the Catechist, and then by them repeated over and over again"*—the catechist being said to instruct, by making the elements of Christian doctrine *resound* in the ears of his students, and the Catechumen being said to be taught, by repeating the words addressed to him, and by answering questions. The persons first catechised, though men in years, were children in the knowledge of the Gospel—so that the same Clement, after Paul, speaks of them as "babes in Christ," and of catechetical instruction as "milk," being as it were, "the first nourishment of the soul."† It was therefore in its matter elementary, and simple in its style, brief and familiar, and relying much for certainty of inculcation on its frequent repetitions. But it addressed the mind. It engaged the heart. It unfolded the whole plan of salvation. It made Apollos "mighty in the scriptures."‡ It could not, therefore, be a mere set form. It was not, therefore, matter for the memory alone. It did not exhaust itself in words and phrases, said by rote. In our day, things are changed. Christianity, in name at least, prevails. The catechumens are now children. But the lesson is the same. The object is the same. The human mind remains the same. And the familiar teaching of the Catechism, its clear analysis of Scripture, its orderly developement of Christian doctrine, its wholesome exhortations to Christian practice, its striking illustrations, its direct appeals, its "line upon line," and "precept upon precept," its adapta-

* Cited by Comber, in Gilly, p. v.

† Bishop Kay's account of the Life and Writings of Clement of Alexandria, pp. 444, 5.

‡ Acts xviii, 24, 25.

tion to every form of character and every grade of intelligence, its variety and simplicity, its homeliness and earnestness, still render it the most effectual instrument of pastoral usefulness, and still claim for it, in its legitimate and proper exercise, that prominent regard which, in the primitive Church, in the Church through which we hold communion with the Apostles,* and in our own Church, has ever been assigned to it. "By catechising," says Bishop Law, whose exposition of the nature of the office we adopt, "I mean not the procuring our own Catechism, or any other short explanation of Christianity, to be said a few times over by rote, nor the delivering any stated discourse thereon, (though these may be of great use in their turns,) but the free, frequent, and familiar exercising of young persons in it, till they thoroughly understand, and can express the meaning of each word and phrase, according to their respective capacities, experience, and degree of improvement; thus leading them on gradually from sounds to sense, forming their thoughts, and fixing their attention to the reason and relation of things; aiding and inuring them to reflect a little on such points as are within their reach; and ena-

* It would occupy much room merely to cite the provisions by which the Church of England has sought to enforce the primitive institution of Catechising. One, which owed its origin to the judicious piety of that rare youth, the sixth Edward, is thus cited by Bishop Gibson in his *Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani*—"In the *Reformatio Legum* there is an excellent rule upon this head. One hour or more in the afternoon service, let the parish-priest take up the Catechism, and give great attention to the explanation of it; for a frequent exposition of the Catechism is of the utmost use and benefit in the Church of God. And we wish this instruction to be given not only to the children, but to the young persons who are growing up, that they also may be well informed in the principles of their religion, and that the assiduity of the children may be stimulated by their presence."

bling them at length to give a clear account of all parts of the Christian dispensation, and become fully acquainted with their duty both to God and man. This is the office of catechising, which though it may appear a low, contemptible one, yet is assuredly an arduous task, and which perhaps requires the greatest pains and skill of any part of the whole ministerial function."*

2. In the discharge of this great duty, thus defined, there doubtless may be used variety of METHOD, and this without departure from its proper purpose and intention. A few suggestions, the result of much reflection, and confirmed in practice, will illustrate my own preference.

i. Whatever helps the Catechist may use, *the Church Catechism should always be the text-book.* There is none so good. There is no other that has authority. The use of Catechisms preliminary to it, and of Catechisms explanatory of it, and of Catechisms for those of riper years, is altogether unnecessary, and tends to distract the mind. Multiply Catechisms as you may, there is but one plan of salvation. That, the Catechism in the Prayer Book fully and faithfully developes. The best could do no more. "The country parson," says godly Herbert, "values Catechism highly. He useth and preferreth the ordinary Church Catechism, partly for obedience to authority, partly for uniformity sake, that the same common truths may be every where professed; especially since many remove from parish to parish, who, like Christian soldiers, are to give the word, and to satisfy the congregation, by their Catholic answers."† In one respect it is peculiar. Parts of it are level to the comprehension of the simplest child.

* Nature and necessity of Catechising.
† The Parson Catechising.

Parts of it, if thoroughly investigated, would task the loftiest reach of the most intellectual man—places in it, as an ancient * writes of sacred Scripture, where every lamb may wade, other places where an elephant must swim. The utmost range is thus permitted to the Pastor in the adaptation of it to the several capacities of those whom he instructs—exacting of all, says Herbert, "the doctrines of the Catechism: of the younger sort the very words; of the elder, the substance."† Remembering, we may add, that as the youngest soon will rank among the elder, the elder soon will pass beyond his reach, he cannot be diligent enough in storing all their memories with the words, in imbuing all their hearts with the substance, of that most admirable Christian manual.

"There are very few human productions," says one who has written admirably on this subject, "upon which a Christian teacher can ground his instructions with so much confidence, as the Church Catechism. The Roman Catholic Catechisms run away into many points of faith and discipline, which have no support whatever from the plain words of Scripture. Several of the best Catechisms of reformed congregations are abstrusely doctrinal,—others are diffuse and lengthened out into treatises; while our own is neither redundant nor dogmatical. It never wanders from Scripture, or runs into nice distinctions: it contains that alone in which all Christians are agreed. It raises no scruples, it offends no prejudices, and its very brevity implies that it leaves much to the judgment of the parish priest, and demands that he do more than confine himself to its concise phraseology—that, taking its letter as his

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* Gregory the Great. † The Parson Catechising.

guide, he make a full and complete illustration of its apostolical lessons. Hence the clergyman who commences his catechetical lectures with this manual in his hand, sets out in good humour with all Christian men. Every body is with him, no man is against him. Those who think the Catechism too short, look to him for amplification. Those who fancy it requires some explanation are glad to have him for an expounder."*

ii. Excellent as the Catechism is, and prominent as it should be in every plan of pastoral instruction, it should always be impressed upon the mind of every child, that *it is nothing, and of no regard, but as it may be proved by Scripture.* While therefore its venerable text should be continually repeated, analysed, enlarged on, illustrated, laid to the heart, applied to all the life, it should be constantly required that every line and word of it be shown to have authority in Holy Scripture. Used in this way, the Catechism explains the Bible, while the Bible sustains the Catechism. The plan of salvation is developed. The doctrines of the Cross are explained. The duties of life are enforced. Of the whole counsel of God no portion is kept back. Of all that appertains to life and godliness no point is left obscure. Nothing can be more impressive, nothing can be more interesting than an exercise like this. The lucid order of the Catechism throws light upon the meaning of the sacred text. The sacred text gives unction, power and life to the instructions of the Catechism. At every step, new confidence is gained, new beauties are apparent. The young Christian drinks conviction from the first fountains of eternal truth; and finds, with lively satis-

* Gilly's Horæ Catecheticæ, pp. 147, 8.

faction, that every word which has been taught him by the Church, has precedent and sanction in the pure word of God.

iii. The exercise of catechising, thus guided by the provision made for it in the Prayer Book, with continual comparison of every point with Holy Writ, *should also be conducted in a constant reference to the order and services of the Church.* In this way, her distinctive features, the authority and constitution of her ministry, the nature and importance of the sacraments, the admirable arrangement of the Christian year, her daily services, her solemn ceremonies, her impressive rites, may all be made familiar to the children, commended to their understandings, made engaging to their hearts; and shown to be not less accordant with the sacred warrant of the word of God than with the dictates of man's reason, and the infirmities, necessities and sympathies of his immortal nature. In this way, objections are answered, prejudices mitigated, ignorance informed. The relation of the parts is shown, and the agreement of the whole. The Church approves herself to be what God designed, the pillar and basis of the truth.* Her service is, and is seen to be, a "reasonable service;" her worship, "the beauty of holiness," commends itself to every heart, and is, as it is felt to be, by every pious soul, a "spiritual sacrifice," acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ.

iv. The catechising *should be "openly in the Church."* This is the provision of the rubric. Of its meaning, there can be no doubt. To catechise the children before the congregation have assembled, or after they have dispersed, is not to comply with it—is to deprive many who might be

* 1 Timothy, iii. 15.

profited by it of the advantage—is to put its light "under a bushel," when it should be set up in the candlestick, and give light to all that are in the house. The disregard of this injunction has tended very greatly to depreciate the Catechising. A thing done in a corner is naturally supposed to be of small importance; and what a thing is thought to be, it commonly is. General interest has been lost. Parents and guardians have seldom favoured it with their presence. It has possessed nothing to render it animating to the Pastor, or engaging to the children. It has become dull, formal work, without estimation, and with but small advantage. In too many cases, it has gone entirely out of use.

v. To restore the catechising to its due importance, it must not only be done openly in the Church, but, when it is done, *it must take the place of the sermon.* Objections will, I know, be raised to this proposal—that the people will complain of it—that it will hinder their edification—that it will make the Church unpopular. They are the objections, I presume to say, of those who never made the trial, or made it partially, and without confidence. The true inquiry to be made is, what is right, and what has been experience? It is right, doubtless, that "the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and that the people should seek the law at his mouth." What the Scripture teaches, what the Church enjoins, what his best judgment recommends, and his conscience honestly approves, he certainly must do. And what he makes it plain that he so does, the people will as certainly allow. They know that the children must be instructed. They know that the Church requires that he should catechise them openly before the congregation. They know that for this service time must

be allowed. They know that to add it to a sermon will exhaust his strength, while it fatigues the children, and is wearisome to them. It is an error to suppose the people blind to these considerations, or deaf to reason and to duty. They are alive to both. They confide in the judgment of him who ministers to them in holy things. They are predisposed to the approval of his godly judgments. Let him convince them that he seeks not theirs, but them; let them be satisfied that he would save their children and themselves; and they will object to nothing that he proposes, they will withhold nothing that he requires,—be it consistent only with the Scripture and the Church. Of the good shepherd, that goeth before his sheep, the saying of the Saviour always will be true—calling his own sheep by name, and leading them out, his sheep will follow him, because they know his voice.* And such is the lesson of experience. Where the catechising has been made a public exercise, and diligently administered, it has secured acceptance with the people, and approved itself a benefit to all. Bishop Sanderson, when he was a parochial Clergyman, used to spend an hour at evening in the Church Catechism: "whereat," says one of his biographers, "the parents and elder sort were wont to be present, and from whence they reaped greater benefit than from his sermons; the great principles of religion working more powerfully upon them than his discourses and enlargements."† "I never yet," says Bishop Fleetwood, "heard catechising in the Church, where I did not see the oldest and the gravest people attend as seriously as any else; and I dare say they were as much edified and more pleased to be so than

* John, x. 4.

† Special Remarks in the Life of Dr. Sanderson, p. 24.

the elder."* "In most country parishes," says the present Bishop of London, "a catechetical examination of young persons, interspersed with judicious illustrations and remarks, will be of greater benefit to the congregation than a second sermon."† My own experience in every respect confirms the statement of these high authorities. Every where, the testimony is, that the catechising at the visitation transcends in interest and in profit the usual sermon. Once in a month, at least, in every parish—as I have practised with entire acceptance and to great advantage in my own—I most decidedly advise the substitution. I am much disposed to think with Bishop Blomfield, that it were well, if it were weekly. I only differ from him, in believing, that in city, equally with country parishes, the practice is not only feasible, but altogether to be commended.

vi. It is scarcely necessary to suggest, that in conducting the catechetical exercise, *distinctness, simplicity, directness, familiarity, variety are elements essential to success. Distinctness* is essential to the hearing, first, and then to the understanding, of the exercise. To ensure the hearing of the answers, as well as of the questions, the minister must often repeat them, as they fall from the weak voice of his little, timid pupil: and this, if it be connected with a word or two, in confirmation, if it be right, in correction, if it be wrong; sometimes by way of explanation, sometimes by way of enlargement,—incorporating as it were the teacher with the scholars,—will give additional weight and value to the lesson. That its whole tenour may be understood, as well as heard, the questions must be short, the points precise, the order natural—the interrogatory so

* Works, p. 467. † Primary Charge, p. 29.

framed, that if the expected answer be not in the words of the Catechism itself, it may be in the fewest words, connected obviously with what precedes, suggesting evidently that which is to follow.—*Simplicity* of matter and of arrangement is a most important quality in catechising. Let a single train of thought be well arranged in the instructor's mind, before he commence the exercise. Multiplicity of subjects divides, complexity of statement will confuse, the attention of the learner. A single doctrine or a single duty, with its connections and its consequences, will often furnish matter for a lesson. The progress made by weeks or months, from step to step, completes in time the whole great subject, and yet never overtasks the youthful mind. A single truth, a single precept, understood, inculcated, laid to the heart, will fix itself there, and, with the Spirit's gracious aid, will live and grow there. Another and another is presented and enforced. The food received is well digested. The soul is fed and nurtured. "The sincere milk of the word" gives gradually place to the "strong meat." The "babe in Christ" increases "in wisdom and in stature," and grows "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."—To this end, *directness* and *familiarity* must come in aid of distinctness and simplicity. The Christian Pastor must be as a father among his children. He must know them all by name. He must arrest the individual eye. He must address the individual heart. To do this, he must come down to the level of every age and capacity. "He is not catechising," says one who understands the subject well, "when he ceases to be perfectly intelligible, easy and familiar."* "He must

* Gilly's Horæ Catecheticæ, p. 148.

descend," says Bishop Sumner, "from the high and lofty tone of language, to walk in the humble terms of Scripture." "He must abound in interrogations and direct addresses, which, however the rules of composition may condemn in writing, the rules of nature sanction and require in speaking."* The great desideratum is to put the children at their ease; and this they will be if they feel that they are talking with a friend. Let your children see that you take pleasure in instructing them. Let them see that what you do, you do from love. Let them feel that what you love in them is their immortal souls, for which the Saviour died; and lead them thus to lay to heart, while yet the heart is young and soft, the unction of that blood which only cleanses from all sin.—Finally, let the subject be relieved, the exercise diversified, the attention roused and kept alive, by a continual *variety*—by sudden and abrupt interrogations, by following out the train of thought which some unlooked for answer may suggest, by availing yourselves of the infinitude of easy, natural and graceful diversions from the main argument, which the laws of association will constantly supply, by direct appeals, by searching questions, by comparison and contrast, by allusions to the

* Apostolical preaching, p. 11. "The concern of a parish minister," says Archbishop Secker, "is to make the lowest of his congregation apprehend the doctrine of salvation by repentance, faith and obedience; and to labour, that, when they know the way of life, they walk in it. If he doth not these things for them, he doth nothing; and it requires much consideration to find out the proper methods of doing them, and much pains and patience to try one after another. Smooth discourses, composed partly in flowing sentences which they cannot follow to the end, containing little that awakes their drowsy attention, little that enforces on them plainly and home what they must do to be saved, leave them as ignorant and uninformed as ever, and only lull them into a fatal security. *Therefore bring yourselves down to their level.*"—*Second Charge.*

incidents and characters of Scripture, by illustrations from the services and order of the Church, by suffering the little learner sometimes to go wrong, that he may correct himself, by directing the honest answers of the children to the exposure and reproof of prevailing error, whether in faith or practice, and by casual remarks, incidental inferences, addresses to children, to teachers, to parents, to the whole congregation—in a word, by whatever the occasion naturally suggests, that can exercise the mind or engage the hearts of the children in "the doctrine which is according to godliness," and at the same time quicken the recollection of those of riper years, impress them with a just sense of their condition and its responsibilities, and provoke them to a holy emulation.

3. Of the final topic of the Charge, the manifold ADVANTAGES of public Catechising, I have inevitably anticipated much. In regard to those which still remain unnoticed—so admirable for usefulness is the primitive institution—the difficulty is, from the great number, which present themselves, to select the few which time and our convenience allow. I shall attempt no more at present than to show, by the enumeration of some leading benefits, its great importance in these two relations—as strengthening the endearing bond which should unite the Pastor with his people, and as a powerful instrument, in his hand, of Christian education.

i. I know not how the nature of that bond which should unite the Pastor with the people can be more fully and more clearly stated, than I find it in a Charge of the present Primate of all England, when diocesan of London. "The allegiance you owe to the Church," he says, "obliges you in every particular of your professional conduct

to look to her for direction, and where she either affords no definite rule, or custom has superseded her original practice, to yield substantial obedience at least by taking her principles for your guide. Her wisdom indeed might of itself command our attention, if her authority were less. In her Canons, which are a body of laws for the general regulation of her discipline, we find many directions of the greatest importance which ought to be familiar to the parish priest. Her liturgical formularies not only supply a collection of prayers, instructions and offices, adapted to all the solemnities of religious worship, to the exigencies of every age and every condition, to the uses of every day, to all the contingencies of life; but virtually establish a system of parochial discipline conceived on an accurate notion of the relation between the pastor and his flock, designed to connect them by a regular intercourse, and to direct the conduct of both parties in the performance of their respective duties. As the ground-work of this plan, *it is her peculiar object to bring the parishioner from his earliest days into immediate contact with his spiritual teacher and guide.* In the tenour of the rubrics annexed to the Catechism, and the offices of Baptism and Confirmation compared with the several Canons relating to the same points, we have connected indications of this design. Whether we look to the dedication of the infant to God by the ministry of the priest, to the profession of faith and obedience which is made in his presence by the Sponsors, or to the exhortation which designates their duties, and specifies the instruction to be given to the child,—we discern the pervading intention of placing the rising generation in the view of the minister, of giving them in the tenderest infancy the advantage of his paternal protection, and

sending them to the Church to be publicly instructed by him in faith and morals, till he is so well satisfied with their proficiency as to recommend them for Confirmation to the Bishop."* This is an admirable statement. It involves an argument powerful indeed to commend the Church to universal acceptation. It presents a beautiful and touching illustration of the Saviour's pitying love for men, in providing for them,—by an office which himself ordained, perpetuates, and has declared that he will bless,—that, from the cradle to the grave, they shall possess, in him who is their minister in holy things, a guide, companion, friend and father.

To strengthen and confirm this holy bond of pastoral love, the institution of the Catechism gives powerful aid by its just *influence with children.* The hearts of little children are soft and warm. They take impressions easily, and hold them long. The pastoral eye, the pastoral voice, the pastoral smile, makes an impression then, which time will not efface. Gathering the lambs with his arm, and carrying them in his bosom, bringing back that which was driven away, and seeking again that which was lost, the good shepherd commends himself not only, but his message, and his Master, to their favour. The love they feel for him insensibly attaches to his work, and he wins souls for Christ, at the time when they are fittest for his service, and in the way which is most certain to secure them to him forever.—Nor is this all. To gain the parent's heart,

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* Charge to the Clergy of the diocese of London, 1822, third edition, pp. 20—22.—I take this occasion to suggest the obvious importance of using every mode of influence to retain the elder children and youth of the congregation in the habit of Catechising. It is for their good. It makes the exercise more interesting. It knits the pastoral bond. It harmonizes and strengthens the Church.

the surest process is to win the child's. There is no bond so strong as nature knits when sanctified by grace. There is no compensation of God's providence so beautiful, as when the child repays the debt of life, by leading them who gave it to the fountain, where men drink, and live forever. And angels, could so base a passion touch their sinless souls, might well be thought to envy him whose pastoral influence God has blessed to uses so divine. And when the little child, by visits such as angels ply from heaven to earth, has led the thoughtless parent to the throne of grace, and round the sacred hearth the pious circle meet to read the word of God, or pour the fervent prayer, there is no dearer bond on earth than that which love and gratitude then knit about the pastoral crook, and a new chaplet then is twined in heaven, to grace the pastoral crown.

ii. Nor, less effectual is the public Catechising, as an instrument of Christian education, than in its influence on the pastoral bond. To suppose that the capacity to comprehend sermons, or even to understand the sacred Scriptures, can be had, without some previous preparation, is an obvious error. For want of elementary knowledge, much preaching is in vain. We take for granted that the people know much more than they have ever had the opportunity to learn. Hence the necessity of Catechising to supply the first principles, to familiarize with terms and forms, to discipline the understanding and prepare the heart. "There is no employment in the world," says Bishop Hall, "wherein God's minister's can employ themselves so profitably as in this of plain and familiar Catechism. What is a building without a foundation? If this ground work be not surely laid, all their divine discourses lie but upon

shifting sand."* "Great scholars," said Archbishop Usher, "possibly may think that it stands not so well with their credit to stoop thus low, and to spend so much of their time in teaching these rudiments and first principles of the doctrine of Christ. But they should consider that the laying of the foundation skilfully, as it is the matter of greatest importance in the whole building, so it is the very masterpiece of the wisest builder."† And Bishop Wilson, in his primitive administration of the diocese of Sodor and Man, having established Catechising as the general usage of the Churches, after prayers in the afternoon, instead of a sermon, refused permission, in a single instance, to depart from this arrangement, on the ground that he considered it of more use to the souls both of the learned and the ignorant than the very best sermon from the pulpit. And in a Charge delivered in his eighty-fifth year, he states his opinion, as "a truth not to be questioned, that the plainest sermon from the pulpit will not be understood, nor profit any who has not been well instructed in the principles of Christianity contained in the Church Catechism." "These," he continues, "are foundation principles, and such as every pastor of souls is obliged to explain, as he hopes ever to do good by his other sermons and labours. We say to explain, not only in set discourses from the pulpit, but in a plain familiar manner, where questions may be asked, and things explained, so as both old and young may be edified. Preaching will always be our duty, but of little use, to those who understand not the meaning of the words which we make use of in our sermons, as, God knows, too many

* The Peace-maker, section 2—Works, viii. 90.
† Sermon before King James I.

must be supposed to do for want of being instructed in their younger years."—Now against the evil thus earnestly deprecated by one, than whom there never was a wiser or better man, the office of Catechising presents a double barrier—first, as it makes the learners intimately familiar with the Scriptures, and then with the Scriptures as received and set forth in the Church. The Scriptures are the truth, containing all things necessary for salvation.—The Church is the ground and pillar of the truth—on which it rests, by which it is sustained and guarded, from which it is presented to mankind, in due connection with the ministry, the ordinances, the institutions and the worship of the Apostles. And the true use and value of her catechetical instructions is well stated by the last biographer of our illustrious Hobart—who was himself not only a great admirer of this good old form of teaching, but a great friend also to the old-fashioned mode of catechising in the Church —as designed to attach her members, "by the power of early habit, to her doctrines, her discipline, and her worship; making them not theologians but Christians, and not Christians in a vague and general sense, but Christians in the Church: recognizing in what it teaches the doctrines of the Gospel; in the sacraments which it administers the covenanted means of grace; in its ministry, a divine commission from Christ and his Apostles; and in its services a rational and heart-felt worship offered to Almighty God."*

It will not need much demonstration to establish from all this the inference, that Catechising tends greatly to shut out error from the Church, and to promote integrity of doctrine. "With respect to the catechetical institution of

* McVickar's Professional Years of Hobart, p. 71.

youth," says Bishop Jebb, "I would remind you that it was the primitive method; employed by the Apostles and their immediate followers, and in after ages by the whole succession of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, for training up and organizing the community of Christians in sound principles of faith, in the love of God and man, and in purity of life and conversation. It is observable accordingly, that in exact proportion as Catechising has been practised or neglected, the public faith and morals have been seen to flourish or decline;" "and it is not too much to say, that next to an established liturgy, and beyond all prescribed confessions of faith, the single ordinance of catechetical institution has, under Providence, been the great stay and support throughout Christendom of orthodox unwavering Catholicity."*

The benefit of Catechising, designed especially for children and young persons, runs over and does good to all the congregation. This is expressed with great simplicity by holy Herbert, in his Country Parson. "He requires all to be present at Catechising: first for the authority of the work; secondly, that parents or masters, as they hear the answers prove, may, when they come home, either commend or reprove, either reward or punish; thirdly, that those of the elder sort, who are not well grounded, may then, by an honourable way, take occasion to be better instructed; fourthly, that those who are well-grown in the knowledge of religion, may examine their grounds, review their errors, and by occasion of both enlarge their meditations."† "By-standers of all degrees of attainment take an interest in observing how the scroll of human

* Primary Charge. † Parson Catechising.

nature is unfolded by this exercise. They are pleased in seeing the effects which religious doctrine has upon youthful minds and hearts—in listening to replies which display the different dispositions and capacities of children—in witnessing the development of character and genius—and in comparing their own religious advancement and acquirements with those of the juvenile circle before them. Many of my congregation have made no secret of confessing that they could not answer questions proposed as well as the children have done, and that they have been thankful for the opportunity of picking up information without the shame or the trouble of asking for it. They have made a still more important acknowledgment—that they have taken kindly hints and rebukes which were aimed at them through younger marks, when a direct reproof would have been intolerable." "The simplicity of the Gospel thus triumphs unexpectedly over the wisdom of the wise; and praise is perfected out of the mouths of babes and sucklings."*

It may be thought that the Catechising so administered will supersede the Sunday School. I answer, no, it will improve and elevate it. The Sunday School system is the application of the great principle of division of labour to the arduous work of pastoral instruction. The Teachers of the Sunday School are thus the Pastor's deputies—his constant supervision, and personal direction of the whole machinery, being indispensable not only to its working well, but to his faithful discharge of his great trust. The Catechising supplies the Pastor with an admirable test of the faithfulness of the Teachers and of the improvement of

* Gilly, Horæ Catecheticæ, 150, 71.

the Scholars. It is his touchstone, to try them, if they be sound in doctrine, if they understand what they read, if they grow in grace.—Nor is this all. It is a nursery of teachers. The Church has suffered much from teachers that had need to learn. The religious instruction of the young has been intrusted to those who were themselves deficient in the first principles of Christian knowledge. Another age must reap, it must be feared, the bitter harvest that has been sown in this. The remedy is to be found in the adoption of the mode of catechetical instruction. Of those who are so trained up, it will be true, as of the youthful Timothy, that from children they have known the Scriptures. Rooted and grounded in the faith, they may be trusted, under the pastoral direction, to establish others. Uniform in doctrine and in practice, built up as living stones upon the sure foundation, the Church of Christ will thus be reared, "an holy temple, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It is a fact most worthy to be noticed, says Shepherd, in his Elucidation of the Book of Common Prayer, that "however individuals or societies have differed in other points, on the utility and necessity of Catechising all have agreed —ancients and moderns; Europeans, Asiatics and Africans; Greeks and Latins; Papists and Protestants; Lutherans and Calvinists; the Church of England and Dissenters. Luther in the beginning of the Reformation wrote two Catechisms; and he assures us that Catechising afforded him more delight than any other ministerial duty." The Church of Rome makes diligent and most effectual use of its instructions. The Council of Trent, in the preface to their Catechism, bear powerful, though reluctant testimony to the value of that office—"the age

is sadly sensible what mischief they (the Protestants) have done the Church of Rome, not only by their tongues, but especially by those writings called Catechisms." To Catechising, Baxter, the great Nonconformist, attributed much of his success at Kidderminster. "When I came thither first, there was about one family in a street that worshipped God, and called upon his name; and when I came away, there were some streets, where there was not past one family in the side of a street that did not so, and that did not, by professing serious godliness, give us hopes of their sincerity. And those families which were the worst, being inns and alehouses, usually some person in each house did seem to be religious. When I set upon a personal conference with each family, and catechising them, there were very few in all the town that did refuse to come."* And of Eliot, the Indian Missionary, who was indefatigable in Catechising, it is said that "he left a well principled people behind him."

The institution of Catechising, so commended by the wisest and the best that have adorned and blessed the Church of Christ, fell for a season into disregard. It is among the signs of the times that give best promise of a brighter age, that in every quarter attention to it has lately been revived. Christians of every name, with self-reproach for their past negligence, resume the instructions of the Catechism. I need not tell you, reverend brethren, how highly I commend their wisdom. I need not tell you how greatly I desire the restoration of the ancient ordinance to its primitive relations. It is grateful to me to know, that in these views I do but sympathize with my revered pre-

* Life and Times.

decessor, who, in two successive Charges, urged upon you with conclusive earnestness the same important subject.* I rejoice to see that every year confirms the wisdom of this course. I fondly trust that in this diocese the Church may one day be restored, in this, not only, but in other points, to the pure pattern of primitive observance. I put on record, in the expressive words of Bishop Hall, the strong conclusions of my personal experience—"the most useful of all preaching is catechetical; this being the ground, the other raiseth the walls and roofe—this informs the judgment, that stirs up the affections. What good use is there of those affections that runne before the judgment? Or of those walls that want a foundation? For my part, I have spent the greater halfe of my life in this station of our holy service: I thank God not unpainfully nor unprofitably. But there is no one thing of which I repent so much, as not to have spent more houres in this public exercise of catechisme; in regard whereof I would quarrel with my very sermons, and wish that a great part had been exchanged for this preaching conference."†

My reverend brethren, the "little children" whom the Church commends to our assiduous care will soon be men and women. Shall they "grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of God," and so be pillars in his house? Or shall they be left to the evil bias of their fallen nature, and to the evil influence of "the instruction which causeth to err," and so be wretched here, and lost hereafter? What we do for "little children," we do for future generations, we do for eternity. It is ours to mould their character;

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* See Bishop Croes' Charges, in 1819, and in 1829.

† Dedication of "The old Religion," Works ix, p. 224.

and so to order, under God, the character of the community. It is ours to win them, if it so please him, for the Lord; and so to do our part in preparing for the Saviour, what he purchased with his own blood, "a glorious Church, not having spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing." Shall we be wanting to such responsibilities? Shall we be negligent of such opportunities? Difficulties doubtless there are and discouragements; and because we cannot do in all respects precisely as we would, and precisely when we would, we are tempted sometimes to give up the effort in despair. But discouragements and difficulties are among the tokens that the work we are engaged in is of God. Discouragements and difficulties are a part of that discipline by which the Lord would harden us, and strengthen us to do him better service. In the cause of Christ, for the glory of his Church, to promote the welfare of our kind, what is there that we cannot bear, and what, with God to help us, that we cannot do? Remembering that the work is his, that the strength is his, that the reward is his, be it ours to give ourselves wholly up to do and bear his will. Who are we that we should be God's fellow-workers in establishing the kingdom of his Son! How unworthy of that holy fellowship, if we are not prepared in all things, to die or live for its accomplishment! How animating the assurance of that reward in heaven, which—not according to our desert, beloved brethren, but according to our desire—shall crown and overpay our utmost efforts to do the will of God!

My reverend brethren, there is one point of pastoral duty, so important to the influence of our office, so absolutely indispensable to the success of all your efforts in the care of "little children," and yet so apt to be neglected, or performed imperfectly, that I feel bound in the most solemn

manner to urge it here and now upon your notice. To have an influence with little children, you must domesticate yourselves among them. A stranger cannot gain their love. The pastor who goes in and out among them, who calls them by their names, who is among them as a father—he gains their confidence, he enshrines himself within their hearts. Nor is it only for their sakes that I commend and urge the duty of pastoral visitation. To "turn the hearts of the children to the fathers, and of the fathers to the children," is a work, for which one day in seven will not suffice. Though you "speak with the tongues of angels," if you do not follow up the lessons of the pulpit, "from house to house," among your people, your labour will too often be in vain. You must add to the authority of the teacher the influence of the friend. You must watch for opportunity, lay wait for souls, and take them with a holy guile. "If you would have access to a man's heart," said that shrewd observer, Richard Cecil, "you must go into his house." And it is so. You take him by the hand. You sit by his hearth. You are partaker at his board. You are at home with him, and you enable him to feel at home with you. You gain his confidence. You touch the electric chain of sympathy. You possess yourself of his affections. You draw him with "the cords of a man."—My reverend brethren, you underrate what I must call your potential influence with your people, and which a little more of pastoral familiarity would render actual and effectual. You do not know how much they reverence your office. You do not know how well disposed they are to love your persons. You do not know how much they long to speak with you "as a man speaketh with his friend;" and how many times the smoking

flax, that at a favourable moment might have kindled into flame, has been put out for want of opportunity. Every where, my reverend brethren, I receive the liveliest evidence of the people's approbation of your public labours. Too often is it qualified with deep regret, that they are not indulged in greater measures with your pastoral intercourse. I know that these complaints are sometimes without reason. But they spring from feelings that do honour to your office. They attest the general estimation of your personal worth. I rejoice to hear them. I beseech you not to disregard them. Accept the challenge which they give. Go in, and occupy the willing hearts that wait on your acceptance. Win them through Christ. Win them to holiness. Win them for heaven.

My brethren, reverend and beloved, the care of souls is a tremendous care. It calls for all our talents, for all our efforts, and for all our time. To be faithful in it, to find a blessing in it, we must give ourselves wholly up to it, and draw our cares and studies all that way. A world is no equivalent to one immortal soul. Ten thousand worlds would be no purchase for one moment of their endless joy, who are "forever with the Lord."

Catechising.

From little down to least—in due degree,
Around the Pastor, each in new-wrought vest,
Each with a vernal posy at his breast,
We stood, a trembling, earnest company!
With low, soft murmur, like a distant bee,
Some spake, by thought-perplexing fears betrayed;
And some a bold unerring answer made;
How fluttered then my anxious heart for me,
Beloved Mother! Thou whose happy hand
Had bound the flowers I wore, with faithful tie;
Sweet flowers! at whose inaudible command
Her countenance, phantom-like, doth re-appear;
O lost too early for the frequent tear,
And ill requited by this heartfelt sigh!—Wordsworth.

HORÆ CATECHETICÆ.

Every youth can preach, but he must be a man indeed who can profitably catechise.—Thomas Fuller.

INTRODUCTION.

The terms *Catechise*, *Catechism*, and *Catechetical*, (from the Greek word Κατηχέω, to *sound aloud*, *to resound*,) are applied to signify instruction conveyed, not by writing, or according to any regular and continued discourse, but by some familiar and brief method of *vivâ voce* teaching. Thus St. Luke, in his Gospel, chapter i, verses 3 and 4;

Ἔδοξε κἀμοὶ, παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι, κράτιστε Θεόφιλε.

Ἵνα ἐπιγνῷς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν.

"It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to *write unto thee in order*, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein *thou hast been instructed*,"—i. e. I think it right to give you a written and succinct account of those things in which you have been initiated, or which you have been taught, *catechetically*,* or by *word of mouth*, or by having them *sounded in your ears*."

St. Luke uses the same word in a similar sense.—*Acts* xviii. 25.

Οὗτος ἦν κατηχημένος τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ Κυρίου.

"This man was [catechetically] instructed in the Gospel."—i. e. He had been initiated in the Gospel, or, he had acquired the *principles* of it, by hearing them delivered to him *vivâ voce*.

* Stephens, Parkhurst, Hammond, Horsley.

That the instruction which Apollos had received was *elementary* only, is clear from the context, ver. 26. "Whom when Aquilla and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and *expounded* unto him the way of God more *perfectly*."

St. Paul evidently applies the same term in the sense of oral instruction, 1 Cor. xiv. 19,—ἵνα καὶ ἄλλους κατηχήσω, "that by my voice I might teach others."

After the Apostles had adopted the word, it was in very common use among the Fathers of the Primitive Church, to signify their peculiar mode of teaching the rudiments of Christianity by question and answer, and by impressing the lessons of the Gospel on the hearts of their Neophytes by frequent repetition.

Hence the *Catechist* was said to instruct, by making the elements of Christian doctrine resound in the ears of his students; and the *Catechumen* was said to be taught by repeating the words addressed to him, and by answering questions.

"Catechism," says Comber, "according to the definition of an ancient author, is, *the knowledge of Religion first delivered to the ignorant by the Catechist, and then by them repeated over and over again.* Κατηχησις ἔστιν ἐπιστημη θεοσεβείας τοῖς ἀπείροις, ἡ δὲ παραδοθεῖσα ὑπὸ κατηχητου, καὶ πάλιν ἀποδοθεῖσα ὑπ' αὐτῶν."—*Clemens Alexandrinus.* Which, continues Comber, appears farther from the very original of the word, being derived from ἠχὼ, that is an echo, or a repeated sound; because the Catechist did first teach them, and then, by way of question, try if they had learnt what he had delivered to them: which gave good grounds to the authors of the Roman Catechism to say, "That the manner of the Apostle's Catechising, which the

Church yet imitates, in the mysteries of Baptism, consisted of Questions and Answers."

Another Expositor of Catechetical instruction calls *Catechising* "A general instruction in the fundamental principles of the Christian Religion, by way of question and answer."

I have merely to add to this statement, that the questioning and answering must be mutual, and that the Catechist does not do his duty by the Catechumen, unless he gives him an opportunity not only of repeating the lesson, but of asking for explanations, and of returning the sense as well echoing back the sound of his instructor.

Those other divine discourses enriche the brain and the tongue; this settles the heart: those other are but the descants to this plaine song. Contemn it not, my brethren, for its easie and noted homelinesse; the most excellent and beneficial things are most familiar.

BISHOP HALL.

My Lord,

As one of the Incumbents in your Lordship's diocese, I had the advantage of hearing that Charge, in which you dwelt with considerable earnestness upon the duty of Catechising, a duty which has been well defined * to be, "Instruction communicated by asking questions, and hearing and correcting the answers."

Your Lordship's directions upon this subject were preceded by some strong observations upon the relation which ought to subsist between a parochial Clergyman and his congregation,—and upon the means that should be adopted to bring the parishioner, from his earliest days, into immediate contact with his spiritual guide.

I have reason to be thankful for the impression, for the deep and lasting impression, which this part of your Lordship's Charge left on my mind. It led me to think more seriously, than I had ever done before, upon the practicability of establishing the relation which you recommended, and of having recourse to those primitive ordinances, and to the exercise of those endearing pastoral duties, which cannot fail of attaching the people to their constituted ministers. Having derived benefit from your Lordship's suggestions, and having been permitted, as I trust, to become an instrument of that good to others, which is likely to result from a regular system of catechetical instruction, I am anxious to give some publicity to the mode which I have

* Bishop Mant, Notes on the Catechism.

pursued, in conformity with your directions, and to its successful issue. It is for this reason that I now address your Lordship; and I am encouraged to do so, not only by the patient ear, which you have always lent to every personal communication, when I have reported from time to time the progress of my experiment,—but also by the desire expressed by your Lordship, that I should commit an account of it to print. But judging from one or two of the sentiments expressed in your Charge, that much as you wish and hope to see public catechising resumed, you entertain doubts as to the success, which may attend it equally in all places, I shall venture to follow your Lordship through your remarks, and to throw out a few reflections, as I proceed, upon the duty and expediency of a universal obedience to the instructions of the Church on this subject, before I enter upon an explanation of the system pursued by myself.

EXTRACT FROM THE BISHOP OF LONDON'S CHARGE.

The following is the passage in your Lordship's Charge, to which I feel indebted for an impulse, which has given a new and more efficient character to my ministerial labours.

"The general disuse into which this practice (CATECHISING) has fallen, I consider as calamitous to the interests of piety in the highest degree, not only by removing one of the strongest incitements to the parents to teach, and to the children to learn, the doctrines and laws of their Christian profession, but still more by its fatal effect in frustrating the purpose, which it was the principal object of the

ordinances relating to these points to attain. If at the age when the mind is susceptible of the strongest impressions, the young are regularly brought into personal intercourse with their minister, and accustomed to receive their instructions from his lips, they will naturally imbibe a respect for his person, and a reverence to the sacred character of his office, which will prove the strongest of barriers against immorality and vice, as well as dissent and infidelity. They will regard with deep veneration the truths which they have received upon his authority, and will feel,—what reasoning can hardly make clear to the ignorant,—the danger no less of guilt than of error, in deserting the appointed guide of their youth for intrusive and unknown teachers. The discontinuance of this salutary practice is imputable, neither to the neglect of the ecclesiastical governors,—for they have constantly remonstrated against it,—nor to the indolence of the parochial Clergy; but was a concession most reluctantly yielded to the fastidious impatience of their congregations.

"I am not so fondly attached to ancient usages, however beneficial in themselves, as to press the crude and hasty revival of a method of teaching, which, at least in its ordinary form, has proved on experience unsuitable to the habits and feelings of modern times. To ensure success to the experiment, much judgment would be requisite in preparing the way by the previous removal of objections, and improving the practice itself by such modifications, as would render it popular as well as useful."*

[* The admirable Charge here cited was delivered by Dr. Howley, the present Archbishop of Canterbury, when Bishop of London, at his Visitation, in July, 1822.—*American Editor.*]

CATECHISING, THE UNIFORM PRACTICE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CLERGY ABROAD.

Very soon after hearing your Lordship deliver these sentiments, I visited the continent; but the impression was not to be effaced by time or distance, nay, I may confidently affirm that the convictions of my mind were strengthened during this visit, and that my intercourse with strangers, and my personal observation of the practice of foreign Clergy, made it more and more clear to me, that parochial discipline cannot be duly maintained, without the assistance of a regular Catechetical system.

The Roman Catholic priesthood are by far too prudent to lose the advantages, which are gained from an early and uninterrupted relation with the younger part of their flock. "Feed my lambs," is an injunction which they obey to the very letter; and they suffer none, no, not even parents themselves, to stand between them and their sacred duty in this department.* It is from the priest's lips that the children of the Romish communion of every degree, receive religious instruction, as soon as they can well understand what religion is; and they naturally reverence the teacher, who first approaches them in the venerable character of God's minister, and love the instructor, who mingles words of kindness and encouragement with his solemn lessons of Christianity. I bear willing testimony to the zealous and affectionate manner in which the Romish Clergy acquit themselves in this duty. The council of Trent†

[* Would that we were but as wise! We should not then hear of Protestant children brought up in troops at Romish Schools—a favour which they *never* reciprocate.—*Am. Ed.*]

† Concil. Trid. Sess. 24.

had the sagacity to make catechising one of the most binding of the sacerdotal services; and in the Preface of the Catechism which was first published by order of this council, a curious remark occurs, which shows how great an advantage is to be gained over our adversaries by strict attention to this duty. "The age is sadly sensible what mischief the Protestants have done the Catholic Church, not only by their tongues, but especially by their writings called Catechisms."

The ministers of the Church of Rome have the good sense to obey the Canon, not as "by constraint, but willingly;" and in sincere admiration of their conduct in this respect, I cannot forbear applying to them the whole of that scriptural passage, towards which my thoughts have been led, and adding, that if, in taking the oversight of their flock, with a ready mind, they bear themselves towards their youthful charge, as the Apostle enjoined, so they may likewise be fairly held up to us, as "examples."

Nothing can be more kind or parental than their catechetical examinations. They do not leave it to parish clerks, or to teachers of an ordinary stamp, to drawl through the same form of words, day after day, and to secure rote without meaning, but they themselves are the judicious expounders. I have entered Churches in France, in Italy, and in Switzerland, and have witnessed the same beautiful scene of a parish priest, surrounded by children of various ranks and ages, mildly questioning, patiently explaining, exhorting, reproving, and instructing like "a man of God," rewarding with smiles of approbation, and rewarded in return by the happy and animated looks of the cheerful circle. In almost all the cases to which I allude, I myself, was the only spectator, and that too often-times, unseen by the priest; who therefore was manifestly dis-

charging this interesting duty, not to be heard or seen of men, but to obtain that influence over his juvenile audience, which the sanctity of his office may justly claim.

THE PRACTICE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CLERGY IN ENGLAND.

My Lord, the same practice, and the same tender and watchful concern over the rising generation, prevail among the Clergy of the Roman Catholic Church in England. They begin to exert their influence during the earliest infancy; they do not suffer catechising to fall into inefficient hands; they do not conduct it as a mere formulary; they do not confine it to seasons, but they make it to be of substantial, and lasting use, by obtaining through its instrumentality a fast hold upon the affections and respect of their flock. It will not be out of place to remark, that I am inclined to attribute a very great measure of the success which the papists have had of late, in effecting conversion, to the mode of catechising which they have adopted. Their catechetical instructions are not given, as on the Continent, merely with a view to the benefit of young hearers, of their own communion, but to seduce such of our people as may chance to drop in, and listen to them. For this purpose all possible notoriety is extended to the proceeding, and the opportunity is embraced, of putting forth such apologetical, familiar, and attractive,* expositions of their doctrine and discipline, as may lead astray the unsettled and wavering professors of a purer faith.

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* The following extract from the form of Catechism, "recom-

This sort of effort answers the purpose better than all the controversy in the world; it is the argument of an active life which convinces common understandings: and if

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mended by authority, for the use of the faithful in the four districts in England," under the signature of the four Vicars Apostolic, will give some idea of the manner in which catechising is conducted in this country by the Roman Catholics.—

The first Commandment.

Q. Say the first Commandment.

A. *I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage.*

Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth; thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them. I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: and shewing mercy unto thousands to them that love me, and keep my commandments. Exod. xx. 2. 6.

Q. Why put you all this in one commandment?

A. Because it all relates to one and the same thing.

Q. Does not the Scripture say that these words, *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing*, are the second commandment?

A. No: the Scripture does not say which is the first, second, or third commandment.

Q. Do not those words, *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing*, forbid the making of images?

A. No: they forbid the making only of idols; that is, they forbid making images to be adored, or honoured, as gods: as it is declared in these words, *Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them.* So that the words, *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing*, &c. are only an explanation of the foregoing words, *Thou shalt not have*

our own Clergy would take similar pains to render their personal office a pattern of zeal, marked by affection, they would be rebuilding the Church upon a basis of moral strength, against which the storm raised by papists or

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strange gods before me. We, therefore, with Saint Augustine, make of them but one commandment.

Q. What is meant by these first words, *I am the Lord thy God*, &c.?

A. By these God declares to us, that he is our true and supreme Lord, and therefore we are obliged to obey him with all diligence.

Q. What are we commanded by this first commandment?

A. By the first commandment, we are commanded to love, serve, and worship one only true and living God, and no more.

Q. What is forbidden by the first commandment?

A. The first commandment forbids us to worship idols, or give to any creature the honour due to God?

Q. What is the honour due to God?

A. The honour due to God is a supreme and sovereign honour, which can be given to no other: we must worship him as our Creator, Redeemer, and last end.

Q. Is it lawful to honour the images of Christ and his saints?

A. Yes: it is lawful to honour the images of Christ and his saints, with an inferior and relative honour, because the honour given them is referred to the things they represent: so that by kissing the cross, or the images of Christ, and by kneeling before them, we honour and adore Christ himself.

Q. Do Catholics pray to images?

A. No, by no means; we pray *before* them indeed, to keep us from distractions, but not *to* them; for we know they can neither see, nor hear, nor help us.

Q. What benefit have we then by them?

A. They movingly represent to us the mysteries of our Saviour's passion, and the martyrdom of his saints.

Q. What benefit have we by honouring and canonizing saints?

A. It strongly moves us to imitate their example, by showing us their rewards.

separatists, would beat in vain. I would say with Archdeacon Bayley, in his admirable charge,* "Let it not be a matter of offence, if I venture to declare my honest opinion, that in this labour of love, we, the Establishment, have yet somewhat to learn from other Protestant Societies, more especially from the Priesthood of the Roman Catholic communion. They are wise in their generation. And as we we were long since, and truly told, 'if we hope to be a match for them, we must imitate them.'"†

Instruction given in Sunday, Charity, or National

Q. How do we honour saints and angels?

A. We honour saints and angels with an inferior honour, as the friends and creatures of God, not as gods, nor with God's honour.

Q. Is it lawful to honour the relics of saints?

A. Yes, with a relative honour, as above explained; for the *handkerchiefs* and *aprons* which had but touched the body of *St. Paul*, cast out devils, and cured all diseases. *Acts* xix. 12.

* To the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Stowe, May, 1826.

† The observations which Bishop Burnet made upon this subject, more than 130 years ago, are so strictly applicable to the present times, that I cannot forbear recording them in this place. "Though there is still much ignorance among their mass-priests, their parish-priests are generally another sort of men. They are well instructed in their religion, lead regular lives, and perform their parochial duties with most wonderful diligence. They are almost perpetually employing themselves in the several parts of their cures:—*instructing the youth*—hearing confessions, and visiting the sick, &c. So that the reformation which popery hath been forced to make, has in a great measure stopped the progress of the reformation of the doctrinal worship, that did so long carry every thing before it."—*Preface to Pastoral Care.*—"The argument," said Burnet, in another place, "in favour of the Church, how clearly so ever made out, will never have a full effect upon the world, till we can show a primitive spirit in its administration."

Schools, is not an evidence of pastoral anxiety, equal to that of catechetical instruction in Church, it being conducted for the most part with closed doors; and constant as a minister's attendance may be in those schools, his labours are unknown to his parishioners at large. Where is the wonder, then, that unreflecting persons, who try modes of faith by the zeal of its ministers, and who have had no opportunity of seeing their own Clergy display anxious interest in the religious cultivation of the younger portion of his flock, should be half won over to the side of the Roman Catholic priest, when he beholds him devoting himself to the spiritual improvement of the youngest and humblest, and dullest of his congregation, and hears him explaining the most beguiling of papal doctrines, in a voice and with a manner which seems to prove that his whole heart is in the cause?

AN INSTRUMENT OF PROSELYTISM.

My Lord, I do not speak unadvisedly, nor ill-naturedly, (for it is not in the shape of a charge against them that I adduce the fact, (when I touch upon the seductive intention and the seductive effect, of the catechetical lectures held by Roman Catholic Priests in England. There is, in the immediate vicinity of London, one of the most flourishing of their establishments for the education of poor children. Many of those admitted here are the children of Protestant*

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* The following case has been communicated to me by the gentleman who took it down, as it was detailed by the mouth of his in-

parents, girls especially, for it is an object to gain over females, the future mothers of families. Their infatuated parents have been tempted to send them to this institution, not merely for the sake of the aid which it affords to persons of large families in an humble condition of life,—but by the effect which the priests' mode of catechising has had upon their own judgment or imagination.

A reference to "The Laity's Directory to the Church Service, for the year 1828," published for Roman Catholics, with the authority of the Vicar Apostolic in England, will furnish some solid proofs of the importance which the Hierarchy of Rome attach to the duty of catechising young

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formant. The child to whom it relates is now a well-behaved and intelligent scholar of the Sunday school of Somers-Town, New Church.

"About two years and a half ago, soon after my being left by my husband, a tall person, (a priest) called upon me, and having asked me if my name was not Farnes, enquired if I had not a child. I replied, yes. He then asked how I provided for him. I told him by my own labour; he then asked, did I not find it very difficult to do it? and, upon my replying that I did, he said, does he go to any school? I told him to Perry-street, a school conducted on the Lancastrian system, where the children's friends pay 2d per week, for the instruction given. He then said, had I not better send him to some charity school? I replied, I should be glad if I could get him into one where he could be boarded; upon this he told me he knew where there was such an one; I then asked where, and if he could inform me how I could get him into it? He told me to come at 8 o'clock, (I think it was at eight o'clock) on the next Sunday morning, to the Roman Catholic chapel in Clarendon-square. Oh! I said, you want to make a Catholic of him then? He said, no, he might come to the school and not be a Catholic; and if I would send him every morning by eight o'clock, that they would keep him; they had a great number they did so by. I said they did not allow them to read the

persons publicly, in the place of divine worship. The hour of catechising is regularly advertised among the services of the Church: and in the notices of twenty-five chapels in, or very near London, care is taken to announce that catechetical instruction forms part of the solemnities of eleven out of that number. For example,

"St. Mary's, Moorfields. A discourse after the gospel at high mass, and vespers on Sundays at three o'clock, and catechism immediately after."

"Sardinian chapel, Duke-street, Lincoln's-inn-fields. After the gospel, at high mass on Sunday, a discourse in English: vespers at three o'clock, immediately after which catechism, and a catechetical discourse."

Bible;—he replied they did, those parts which were fit for them, and that they taught children their duty to their parents, that the Catholic children were much better behaved than the Perry-street boys. Then I perceive you are a Catholic yourself, I observed. He replied, *rather so*. I then said, I could not agree to his going: he said I was very wrong, for if I did, that I might be sure I should have employment for myself, and my child provided for; he desired me to come on the following Sunday, and hear the children catechised, he was sure I should approve of it. I told him I would consider of it. He then left me; but came again in about a fortnight, and complained that I was not at the chapel. He then asked where was your boy on the Sabbath day, if you were out at work? He told me if I would come on the Sunday morning to the chapel, I should be relieved; that I need not work on the Sabbath-day: I stated I had been in a Roman Catholic chapel but twice, and in my present mind, I should not enter one again. He then left me, saying, he should call again; but did not.—Throughout these conversations he called me his child."

It is notorious that many Protestant children, drawn away thus, are brought up in this Roman Catholic establishment. One poor man has been persuaded to send two of his children there.

"Chelsea New Chapel. Catechism at half-past two, and vespers, with benediction, at half-past three."

"London Road. Vespers in summer at half-past three, in winter at three o'clock: after vespers the catechism explained."

"Somers Town. At six, catechism, followed by the benediction of the blessed Sacrament."

PRACTISED BY THE FOREIGN PROTESTANT CLERGY.

It would be needless to produce any further testimony of the exemplary anxiety displayed by the Romish clergy to bring themselves into regular intercourse with the young. I will therefore proceed to make a few brief remarks upon the value, which the Protestant, as well as Roman Catholic, Churches on the Continent attach to public catechising, as an indispensable branch of the clerical office.

De Thou's account of the pains, which the ministers of the Reformed Churches of France took, in past times, to lay a good foundation, at an age, when the mind is susceptible of the strongest impressions, is literally applicable to the present period of their ecclesiastical history. "You can scarcely find a boy among them who cannot give you an intelligible account of the faith they profess." This was said of them two hundred and fifty years ago: and, at a still earlier date, a Popish theologian, who was sent to convert the Protestants of Dauphiné, came back ashamed of his errand, and avowed that it was a hopeless case to attempt to make proselytes, in a quarter where the youngest were so well grounded in the principles of their creed by

their pastors.* "I have learnt," exclaimed he, "more of the doctrine of salvation from the answers of little children in their Catechism, than in all my previous studies."†

It is well known, that the Protestant congregations in France and Switzerland, in their solicitude to remove as far as possible from the stumbling blocks of Popish error, tolerate but very few forms of prayer. Most of them have, however, strongly marked their sense of the expediency of public catechising, by admitting into their simple Liturgies an order of service and form of prayer used for the preparation of Catechumens. But it is not in the sanctuary only, that our Protestant brethren on the Continent impress upon the minds of their juvenile congregations the awful responsibility of the Christian covenant. They follow them to their houses at stated intervals; and, extending their pastoral care to old as well as to young, they ask for an account of their studies and meditations in the bosoms of their families. I have now an extract from a traveller's letter before me, in which he writes thus of one of these interesting scenes.

"The pastor of ——— was engaged in his district examination. The intention of this is to ascertain the religious and moral state of each hamlet. During the short time we witnessed his labours, he asked his people if any of them wished for an explanation of any particular passages of Scripture, which they had not clearly understood. After having addressed himself to almost every one in par-

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[* An incident worthy of all observation.—*Am. Ed.*]

[† The exercise of Catechising is to the teacher himself a constant source of instruction and improvement. Let any try who doubt.—*Am. Ed.*]

ticular, he concluded by a most affectionate exhortation, and a solemn prayer."

I myself had the satisfaction of being present at more than one of the Catechetical lectures, which constitute a regular division of the parochial minister's labours in the Protestant valleys of Piedmont. At stated periods, the Churches are opened on Mondays and Wednesdays for this mode of instruction expressly, and it is uniformly imparted by the pastors themselves, although each village has its appointed schoolmaster. Happily, the parochial clergy in these secluded regions, are too sensibly alive to the interests of religion, to resign religious instruction entirely to lay-teachers.

ITS HAPPY EFFECTS.

The effect of this watchfulness over the spiritual progress of their youthful flock is exactly what your Lordship has so well expressed. "If the young are brought into regular intercourse with their ministers, and accustomed to receive their instructions from his lips, they will naturally imbibe a respect for his person, and a reverence for the sacred character of his office, which will prove the strongest of barriers against immorality and vice, as well as dissent and infidelity. They will regard with deep veneration the truths which they have received upon his authority, *and will feel what reasoning can hardly make clear to the ignorant*, the danger no less of guilt than of error in deserting the appointed guide of their youth, for intrusive and unknown teachers." Should there ever be that general

disuse of the practice of catechising in the little Church of the valleys, which your Lordship bewails in this country, as being "calamitous to the interests of piety in the highest degree," and which has been well pronounced by another authority to be "as unreasonable, as the effect is disastrous," I am persuaded that the light which has been permitted by Divine Providence, to shine so long in the midst of Papal darkness, will soon tremble in its lamp, and finally be extinguished by Papal violence or stratagem.

I began this letter by expressing my gratitude to your Lordship for directing my attention to the serious duty, which, I trust nothing will ever induce me to neglect; the mention of the Vaudois of Piemont, leads me to acknowledge another heavy debt, (and the digression will be allowed,) under which they and I are bound to you.

It required the influence of exhortation and example to render successful those endeavours, which humbler advocates were making in behalf of this Protestant community. Had not their cause been espoused by some person in authority, it would have been hopeless. You, my Lord, were the first to extend that aid which the case required. Your influence, your advice, your time were freely given. In the midst of many other pressing occupations, you were always accessible. May you long have opportunities of exercising one of the most graceful privileges of high station, and continue to secure permanent sentiments of respect, by similar instances of kindness and consideration!

To return to the more immediate subject in view. Your Lordship has stated that the discontinuance of the salutary practice of catechising "is imputable neither to the neglect of the ecclesiastical governors, for they have constantly re-

monstrated against it, nor to the indolence of the parochial Clergy; but was a concession most reluctantly yielded to the fastidious impatience of their congregations."

MEASURES WHICH HAVE BEEN ADOPTED IN ENGLAND TO ENFORCE CATECHISING ON THE PART OF THE ESTABLISHED CLERGY.

My Lord, you have done no more than justice to the heads of our Church, in saying that they have constantly remonstrated against the neglect of this duty. The charges of our most distinguished Prelates, for the last century and a half, abound in expostulations with their Clergy on account of their dereliction of it. Indeed the Liturgy, the Canons, and the Rubric demand so strict an attention to the letter of the precept, that it is impossible for our ecclesiastical governors to pass over the violation of it in silence.

But, my Lord, I cannot help entertaining an opinion, that little as the custom of catechising seems to prevail at this time among the established Clergy of England, as much attention is paid to the duty by the reflecting portion of the profession now, as at any former period of our ecclesiastical history. Yes, lamentably remiss as we are in this point, I think we can bear comparison with our ancestors, taken as a body. The theory of catechetical instruction has always been admitted to be beautiful; but, with strange inconsistency, the practice has ever been slack and irregular.* My judgment is formed upon the injunctions

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[Why should it be so?—*Am. Ed.*]

and canons which have been put forth from time to time, imposing penalties upon the non-performance of this service, and upon the complaints which have never ceased to issue from Archbishops and Bishops. So that it is really difficult to ascertain which was the golden period, when this "godly discipline, and laudable custom of the Church of England," was in perfection.

Archbishop Cranmer spoke of its neglect, in the Dedication of his Catechism * to king Edward the Sixth, in the year 1548, although a royal injunction for its strict observance had been promulgated in the former reign, twelve years before.

CANONS OF EDWARD VI.

Public authority twice interfered during the last Edward's brief sovereignty. But what great benefit could be expected from a limited order like the following?

"The curate of every parish, once in six weeks at the least, upon warning by him given, shall upon some Sunday, or holiday, half an hour before evensong, openly in the Church, instruct, and examine so many children of his parish sent unto him, as the time will serve, and as he shall think convenient, in some part of this catechism.† And all fathers, mothers, masters, and dames, shall cause their

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* See Burnet's History of the Reformation. Vol. II. 71.

† This catechism was nearly the same as that now in use, save that the part which relates to the sacraments, had not yet been added. It was introduced after the conference in the reign of king James I. between the Episcopalians and Puritans.

children, servants, and apprentices (which are not yet confirmed,) to come to the Church, at the time appointed, and obediently hear, and be ordered by the curate, until such time as they have learnt all that is here appointed for them to learn." 2. 5, Ed. VI.

An interval of six weeks * was permitted to elapse between each act of public instruction, and even then the time specified was *half an hour* only. Little, indeed, was likely to be gained, by such a process, on the part of an illiterate population, very few of whom could read; and whose ignorance therefore required that the curate should recite the leading articles of our faith, little by little, till the learners could repeat them by heart.

PENAL INJUNCTIONS OF ELIZABETH.

It is manifest enough, that nothing very effectual could result from such an infrequent exercise of the duty, as that with which the framers of Edward's injunction would have been satisfied. And so it was found; for by a very early act of queen Elizabeth, the curate was required to perform this service every *second* Sunday. The *Constitutions* of 1571 improved upon this provision, and inserted a clause to the following effect:

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* The injunctions and articles to be enquired of at the king's visitation, in 1547, contained a query, put to "parsons, vicars, and curates," which was better calculated to secure the attention of the Clergy, "Have you, on Sundays and holidays, taught your parishioners, and especially the youth, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the ten commandments, and expounded the same?"

"On every Sunday, and holiday, at twelve o'clock, the Clergy shall repair to their Churches, and there spend two hours at least in reading and explaining the catechism; and they shall instruct therein all their parishioners, of every age and condition; and they shall take especial care that none be permitted* to receive the Communion, or to *contract marriage*, &c. before they can well and sufficiently answer all the questions in the catechism.†"

From thenceforward we might suppose, that the object of the Church was completely attained, and that clergy and people submitted equally to this preremptory law. But no! twenty years afterwards, Archbishop Whitgift felt himself constrained to notice the desuetude into which the practice had fallen, and to exhort his suffragans, "In the fear of God, according to their pastoral care, and by the duty which they owed both to God and his Church, to give straight charge to the clergy and their parishioners, to see that the children, and other ignorant persons, were duly instructed, and examined in their catechism, as, by the orders of the Church, they ought to be."‡

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* Another penalty proposed during this arbitrary reign, was, "That he, whose child, at ten years old and upwards, was not able to say the catechism, should pay ten shillings to the poor's box; the like penalty to be inflicted upon masters and mistresses, who had servants of fourteen years and upwards, who could not say the catechism by heart."

† Wilk. iv. 265.

‡ "Anno. 1591. Reg. Whitgift, vol. i. 185."

The 59th of "the Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical," agreed on in 1603, departed, in some degree, from the severity of Elizabeth's enactments, but its penal character proves that the continued laxity of the clergy still demanded a coercive hand.

"Every parson, vicar, or curate, upon *every Sunday and holy day*, before evening prayer, shall, for half an hour and more, examine and instruct the youth, and ignorant persons of his parish, in the ten commandments, the Articles of the Belief, and in the Lord's Prayer: and shall diligently hear, instruct, and teach them the catechism, set forth in the Book of the Common Prayer. And all fathers, mothers, masters, and mistresses, shall cause their children, servants, and apprentices, which have not learned the catechism, to come to the church, at the time appointed, obediently to hear, and to be ordered by the minister until they have learned the same. And if any minister neglect his duty herein, let him be sharply reproved upon the first complaint, and true notice thereof given to the Bishop or Ordinary of the place. If, after submitting himself, he shall wilfully offend again, let him be suspended. If so the third time, there being little hope he will be therein reformed, then excommunicated, and so remain, until he will be reformed. And likewise if any of the said fathers, masters, mistresses of the children, servants, or apprentices, shall neglect their duties, as the one sort in not causing them to come, and the other in refusing to learn, as aforesaid, let them be suspended by their Ordinaries, (if they be not children,) and if they so persist by the space of a month, then let them be excommunicated."

It is manifest from the terms, "*examine and instruct*," and "*shall diligently hear, instruct, and teach*," that the canon exacts much more, than that the clergyman should merely hear the children say the form of Church catechism by rote. A careful instruction in the principles therein set forth is the object of this canon: and in bishop Gibson's "Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani," we find a note upon the words "examine and instruct the youth," to the following effect:—

"In the *Reformatio Legum* there is an excellent rule upon this head. One hour or more in the afternoon service, 'Let the parish priest take up the Catechism, and give great attention to the explanation of it; for a frequent exposition of the Catechism is of the utmost use and benefit in the Church of God. And we wish this instruction to be given not only to the children, but to the young persons who are growing up, that they also may be well informed in the principles of their religion, and that the assiduity of the children may be stimulated by their presence.'"

But whether it was, that the express mention of the *Ten Commandments, the Articles of the Belief, and the Lord's Prayer*, gave such a formal and limited construction to the canon, as to defeat the more substantial object regarded by the clause that immediately follows: viz. "shall diligently hear, instruct, and teach them the Catechism," &c.—or that the service was rendered obnoxious by its appearance of constraint, and by the penalties attached to the non-performance of the duty, menacing both the negligent minister, and the careless parents and masters, who would not send their children to be so taught,—certain it is, that the Church gained nothing in point of true allegiance by having her ordinance thus defined and enforced.

"Your Majesty," said a Right Reverend preacher before King James, in 1624, "can never be sufficiently commended, in taking order, that the chief heads of the Catechism should, in the ordinary ministry, be diligently propounded, and explained unto the people throughout the land; *which I wish were as duly executed every where, as was piously by you intended.*"

About the same period, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in a letter written to the Archbishop of York, complained thus grievously of the neglect of catechising, by the English Clergy: "The which kind of teaching, (to our amendment be it spoken,) is more diligently observed in all the reformed Churches of Europe, than of late it hath been here in England. I find his majesty much moved with this neglect, and resolved, if we Bishops do not see a reformation hereof, which I trust we shall, to recommend it to the care of the civil magistrate."

RUBRIC OF 1661.

In pursuing the enquiry, we shall find that the rubrics, which were re-modelled in the reign of Charles II, have not been much more successful, although they are in their nature more obligatory than the canons, because they are made binding by statute, as well as ecclesiastical law. Within so short a period as ten years after their enactment, Archbishop Sheldon, by the king's command, sent letters to the Bishops, requiring them "to enforce the execution of such laws and constitutions, as enabled them to enjoin the use and exercise of our Church Catechism;" a pretty

clear proof of the general carelessness. Cosins, Bishop of Durham, must have understood the extent of this insufficiency, when he observed,* that the rubric is expressed in indefinite terms, and that a parochial Clergyman is not obliged by it to catechise more frequently than he himself thinks necessary. In one respect, by changing the time from "half an hour before evening prayer," to an interval "after the second Lesson," it varies directly from the 59th canon, and so far the trumpet of the law gives an uncertain sound. "The curate of every parish shall diligently, upon Sundays and holy days, after the second Lesson at evening prayer, openly in the Church instruct and examine so many children of his parish, sent unto him, as he shall think convenient, in some part of the Catechism." †

INSUFFICIENCY OF THE RUBRIC TO REVIVE EFFECTIVE CATECHISING.

The principal inconvenience of this rubric is found in the time it enjoins for the exercise of the duty, which seldom fails of exciting impatience in the congregation, and of producing results inconsistent with the spirit of the ordi-

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* See Shepherd on the Common Prayer, vol. ii. p. 276.

[† The requirements for the discharge of this duty among us are *rubrical* and *canonical*. The *rubric* before the Catechism, or rather the title of the Catechism, declares it "an instruction, *to be learned by every person* before he be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop." The *rubrics* after the Catechism prescribe that "the minister of every parish shall diligently, upon Sundays and Holy-days, or on some other convenient occasions, *openly, in the Church*, instruct or

nance. To catechise during an interval of Divine Service, is to lose the effect of that more familiar and personal examination of each child, according to the nature of his answers, which is the life and essence of the practice. Moreover, while the minister is in the midst of the evening prayer, and the congregation are silenced by the solemnity of the Liturgy, it may be thought ill-timed and injurious to the seriousness of their devotion, to interrupt them by a process of interrogation, which may, occasionally, sink into the ridiculous, by the replies of simple and ignorant childhood.

I should be sorry to put any wrong construction upon your Lordship's sentiments, but I consider, that the following passage in your Lordship's charge, has reference to the inutility of confining ourselves to the system proposed by the Rubric, and gives some warrant to the observations which I have just hazarded. "I am not so fondly attached to ancient usages, however beneficial in themselves, as to press the crude and hasty revival of a method of teaching,

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examine so many of the children of his parish, sent unto him, as he shall think convenient, in some part of this Catechism." And again, "all fathers, mothers, masters and mistresses, shall cause their children, servants and apprentices, who have not learned their Catechism, to come to the Church at the time appointed, and obediently to hear, and to be ordered by the minister, until such time as they have learned all that is here appointed for them to learn." The *Canon* (twenty-eighth of 1832,) prescribes that "the ministers of this Church, who have charge of parishes or cures, shall not only be diligent in instructing the children in the Catechism, but shall also, by stated catechetical lectures and instruction, be diligent in informing the youth and others in the doctrines, constitution and liturgy of the Church."—*Am. Ed.*]

which, at least in its ordinary form, has proved, on experience, unsuitable to the habits and feelings of modern times."*

What, indeed, is more likely to render a congregation impatient, than to make a break in their devotions, for the purpose of an exhibition, which has nothing in it either of an instructive or impressive nature? They can say the Catechism themselves, and they are aware, that the children who are commanded to stand up before them, can also repeat it. It is a congregational, and not a scholastic exercise that is required: a service which shall employ men's thoughts, remind them of that which they have forgotten, or explain that which they do not understand. A well known manual, equally familiar to all present, repeated over and over again, Sunday after Sunday, cannot by any possibility produce the effect contemplated by those who enjoined the ordinance. It might answer some good when very few could read, and when the children, apprentices, and servants, had no other means of acquiring the form of words, contained in the leading articles of the Catechism, than from the mouth of the priest, as he distinctly recited them from the desk or pulpit. But now, when it may be taken for granted, that the form is well taught elsewhere, and that the attendant at Church is desirous to leave the principles, or at all events, the mere enunciation of Christian doctrines, and to go on unto perfection, it is, really, nothing but disappointment and vexation, if he be detained to listen to the same elementary examination, without the chance of carrying away with him, a particle of additional knowledge.

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* Charge of 1822, p. 24, 3d Edition.

Any unvaried monotonous process is unable to awaken interest either in the examinant or by-stander, and therefore, even the best exposition of the Catechism, if it be always drawn from the mouths of the children in the same order of question and answer, would become so cold in its style, and stiff in its application, as to excite the same disrelish as the Catechism itself, when taught by rote only. It is the lesson-like character of the mode, when adopted in literal obedience to the Rubric, and the dull task-work, which the querist, the respondent, and the congregation feel in an equal degree, which have rendered, and will continue to render, the old method uninviting, and therefore uninfluential.

Seeing then, that the verbal construction of the Injunctions, Canons, and Rubrics, have had some tendency to defeat the object proposed by them, in that they have prescribed times and seasons, and induced a neglect, or cold performance of duty, on the part of those who give themselves no trouble to enquire into the nature and duty of catechising, is the system to be abandoned altogether? Not so, but it becomes a question, whether it may not be improved, and whether a spirit of emulation may not be stirred up by other and higher motives than a legislative enactment. The letter of the law being dead, or considered so, by those who forget their subscriptions and declarations of conformity, is there not some ever living spirit of the rule by which we may be guided and governed?

Your Lordship has not overlooked this. You have reminded us, that we are to consult the tenor of the Liturgy and services of the Church, and there we shall find how solemnly the attention of the pastor and his people is drawn to the demands of their mutual relation as shepherd

and fold, and to the conduct of both parties in the performance of their respective duties. "Whether we look to the dedication of the infant to God by the ministry of the priest, to the profession of faith and obedience which is made in his presence by the sponsors, or to the exhortation which designates their duties, and specifies the instruction to be given to the child, we discern the pervading intention of placing the rising generation in the view of the minister, of giving them in the tenderest infancy the advantage of his paternal protection, and sending them to the Church, to be publicly instructed by him in faith and morals."*

MOTIVES DERIVED FROM THE BAPTISMAL SERVICE.

In the baptismal service, the very first supplication which the priest addresses to the throne of Grace, publicly before the congregation,† is that "the child may be received into the *ark of Christ's Church*." The next petition is, that the infant "being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally he may come to the land

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* Charge of 1822, p. 21, 3d Edition.

† The Rubric directs that baptism should be administered upon Sundays and other holy days, "*When the most number of people come together*," for the express purpose that "every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God." It adds "in his baptism," but can the reflecting priest forget that *his* professions, made when he was consecrated to God, as the minister of God's word, demand something of him also, viz. that he shall "*teach*, premonish, feed, and provide for the Lord's family."

of everlasting life." What clergyman is so dull, or so fanatical, who would not shrink indignantly from the reproach, if he were asked, Do you presume, then, that the prayers of the Church, without any of the efforts of the Church, through its ministers, are to go on accomplishing this blessed effect? When the child arrives at years of understanding, if he shall live to a period of temptation, will he pass safely through the waves of this troublesome world, without any helping hand, without any spiritual guide to direct him?

Were the infant left here, it would be the veriest mockery, and therefore the service proceeds to speak of the rebuke which the disciples received from our Lord, when they would have kept little children from him, and to remind us, by implication, that we are to receive them, not only to formularies, but to instruction; not only at the baptismal font, but at the chair of the catechist—to acquaint them with the *nature*, as well as with the words of Baptismal Regeneration.

How is the child, who "is dedicated to God by our office and ministry," to "remain in the number of God's faithful and elect children through Jesus Christ," should length of days be extended to him, unless he be brought to a vital knowledge of Jesus Christ, through our office and ministry? It is mere lip-service "to give thanks unto Almighty God, and to make our prayers unto him, that this child may *lead the rest of his life according to this beginning*," unless we ourselves, to the utmost of our abilities, obey the further injunctions of the Church, and explain to him, what it is, "to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, and to *continue Christ's*

faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end." Again, how can we seriously proceed to exhort godfathers and godmothers to "remember that it is their parts and duties to see that the infant be taught what a solemn vow, promise and profession he hath made, and to provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue, and all the things which a Christian ought to know to his soul's health," unless we ourselves are prepared to be at our posts, when the time shall come and to teach them to understand the same? Who can conceive that the same Church, which propounds the form and "ministration of public baptism," and the form of "Catechism to be learnt of every person, &c." has greater claims upon the sponsors who are *to see* that infants be taught, than upon the ministers whose duty it is to explain the lesson in question?

MOTIVES DERIVED FROM THE ORDINATION SERVICE.

But a more sacred appeal yet remains, and it can be shown, that what a sponsor undertakes for his god-child, the parochial minister undertakes for "all such as are, or shall be committed to his charge," within the extent of a possible quantity of duty—that is, as far as it is practicable. Yes, there is a solemn account which every Parish Priest has to render, in conformity with his Ordination vow, infinitely beyond all the obligation which Acts of Parliament, Constitutions, or Canons, can impose. He may evade the letter of these, and may persuade himself that he has catechised, and taught and initiated, according to Rubrick or

Canon, if during certain seasons of the year, he have gathered together the school children, or others of his parish, about the rails of the altar, or reading-desk, and questioned them as to their proficiency in saying by heart the form of the Church catechism. But a reference to the Ordination Service will lead to a bitter reprehension of himself, should he not have carried his instructions to a much greater extent, and questioned personally as many young people as he could induce to answer, concerning "the reason of the hope which is in them."

I conceive, therefore, that your Lordship, in common with the other Prelates of the realm, would be able to admonish and rêprove a negligent catechist with irresistible authority, by censures resting solely on the solemn engagements made by Deacons and Priests under the imposition of hands, and the awful sponsion at the altar. "The questions," says Burnet, "are put in the name of God and of his Church, which make the answers to them to be of the nature of vows and oaths, so that if men do make conscience of any thing, and if it is possible to strike terror into them, the forms of our Ordination are the most effectually contrived for that end that could have been framed."*

"It appertaineth to the office of a Deacon—to instruct the youth in the catechism.—Will you do this *gladly* and *willingly?*" demands the Bishop.

"I will do so by the help of God!" is the answer.

That the Deacon may understand that it is no hasty and formal compliance with this and other duties of his profession, which is required, but an essential performance of them, he is further asked,—

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* Pastoral Care.

"Will you apply all your diligence to frame and fashion your own life, and the lives of your families, according to the doctrine of Christ: and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples of the flock of Christ?"

"I will do so, the Lord being my helper."

In the Ordination of Priests, the duty of pastoral and catechetical instruction, as independent of that of public preaching, and in addition to it, is so distinctly marked, and seriously defined, that none could evade it, without the help of a supposed obedience to the letter of the Canons and Rubric.

"And now again we exhort you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you have in remembrance into how high a dignity, and to how weighty an office and charge, ye are called: that is to say, to be *messengers*, *watchmen*, and *stewards*, of the Lord; to *teach*, to *premonish*, to feed and provide for the Lord's family, and *to seek for Christ's sheep* that are scattered abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever. If it shall happen that any member thereof take any hurt or hindrance, *by reason of your negligence*, ye know the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment that will ensue. Wherefore consider, within yourselves, the end of your ministry towards the children of God, towards the spouse, and body of Christ; *and see that you never cease your labour, your care and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you*, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are, or shall be, committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that *ripeness* and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place

left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life," &c.

After this exhortation follow these questions;—

"*Are you determined out of the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge*," *&c.?*

Answer—"I am so determined by God's grace."

"Will you then give your faithful diligence, so that you may teach the people committed to your care and charge, to keep and observe the same?"

Answer.—"I will do so by the help of God."

"Will you be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God's word: and *to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick, as to the whole, within your cure, as need shall require*, and occasion shall be given?"

Answer—"I will, the Lord being my helper."

Such are the duties of *Catechising* and of pastoral instruction, according to the ordination engagements. The Ordination Service defines them; and the bishop who ordains, imperatively exacts them, as an obligation binding on the souls of priests and deacons, not only according to the letter, but to the spirit, and the full meaning of the words in which it is conveyed. It is a stipulation entered upon at the altar: it is a covenant ratified before God, and in the presence of the congregation, that the person who is admitted into Holy Orders, "*shall never cease his labour, care, or diligence, till he hath done all that lieth in him, both by public and private monitions and exhortations to bring those committed to his charge to the ripeness and perfectness of Christ.*"

"My advice," said Bishop Burnet in his Discourse on

the Pastoral Care, "is, that those who are already in Orders, will at least four times a year, on the Ordination Sundays, read over the offices of the degree of the Church in which they are; and will particularly consider the charge that was given, and the answers that were made by them: and then ask themselves as before God, who will judge them at the great day, upon their religious performance of them, whether they had been true to them or not."

A MISTAKEN IDEA, THAT THE NECESSITY OF CATECHISING IS SUPERSEDED BY THE NATIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM.*

Your Lordship has expressed yourself unwilling to impute the discontinuance of catechising to the "indolence of the parochial Clergy." Indolence is not, I would hope, the fault of the Clergy of the day; and if there be any disinclination to exercise the functions of catechists, it is more likely to arise from an erroneous persuasion, that their other labours have been such as to render it unnecessary, than from any unwillingness to encounter personal trouble. There is scarcely a parish, in your Lordship's diocese at least, where a school of some description, Sunday or weekly, has not been instituted, under the superintendence of the parochial minister, for the religious improvement of the children of the poor. To the internal management of such establishments the Clergyman devotes much of his time and attention: he is present at examina-

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[* Has there not been among us the same mistaken reliance on the *Sunday School* system?—*Am. Ed.*]

tions,—he provides that scriptural lessons shall form the principal subjects of instruction; and all being under his immediate care, he believes that he does enough, and obeys the Rubric and the Canon, while he thus "causes the children, who have not learnt the Catechism, to come to hear and be ordered, till they have learned the same." I am confident there is so much good intention in these and other labours of the generality of my Clerical brethren, that there are but few of them, who could not be soon brought to admit, that in this superintendence of parish schools, they are performing only *half* of their catechetical duties, and that they are falling very far short of the good which they conscientiously propose to themselves. Parents, and parishioners at large, in their own persons, are not benefited by this substitution for the old practice; young persons of a higher degree, who are not in the habit of receiving instruction in parochial schools,—servants, apprentices,—and all, at that dangerous crisis, between childhood and maturity, lose the advantage of those practical and familiar illustrations of divine truth, which the interrogatory system affords, when it is transferred from the Church to the school-room. Catechising should always be a congregational service; for well-ordered questions draw out the attention, and quicken the apprehension, not only of those who have to make a reply, but of those who are mere listeners, and take no further part in the service.*

But this is not the only reason why the institution of parish schools should not be permitted to dispense with the

[* Experience affords abundant demonstration of the truth of this statement.—*Am. Ed.*]

primitive custom. The more general that education becomes, the more imperative is the duty of the parochial minister to ascertain its effects upon the minds of his young flock, beyond the period of their probation as eleemosynary scholars. If he have laid the foundation, he should carry up the building, or, at least, he should make himself acquainted with the scriptural soundness of the superstructure. As he has been instrumental in giving his youthful parishioners new powers of acquiring good and evil,—he should continue to direct their application. He should provide wholesome food for the craving appetite which he has excited; and by examination in the face of the congregation, should prove that he is not indifferent to the spiritual wants and interests of ripening years.

As long as Sunday, parish, and national schools are used as helps to the parochial clergy, and the services of the schoolmasters therein engaged, are employed to prepare children for their appointed catechist, the incumbent or his curate, and to relieve him from the toilsome work of primary instruction, they will continue to be beneficial in no ordinary degree. But whenever they shall be regarded as sufficient for all the purposes of elementary training in religious knowledge,—and the ordained guide to Christian truth shall think himself justified in deputing his catechetical duties to an incompetent lay-assistant, and in breaking the tie of connexion between himself and his flock, effects will follow, which may, in the end, direct the engine of national education against the hand that first applied it.*

* "Do the times then no longer require it?" asks Archdeacon Bayley, in his eloquent and animated Charge; "far other is the

ERRONEOUS ESTIMATE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CATECHISING.

A late Prelate, Bishop Edmund Law, who published, in the last century, an excellent "Dissertation on the nature and necessity of Catechising," attributed the discontinuance of the service to two causes: First, a low estimate of its importance on the part of some; and, secondly, a sense of its difficulties on the part of others. "At present this is a work which many, either discouraged by disuse, and the despicable notions which are apt to be entertained of it, or deterred by its difficulty, are extremely shy of undertaking. Some have not the desire, some not the resolution to set about it!"

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case. Much of that ignorant impatience of discipline, that ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, that heartless indifference, which usurps the name of liberality, and that licentiousness of self-will, which marks the latter days, as it disgraced the worst period, perhaps, of our annals; much of all this, as well as of viciousness of life and error in religion, is owing to 'ungroundedness in the points of Catechism.' Equally fallacious is the notion, that Sunday Schools, and more especially the national system, preclude its use, or remove the minister's responsibility. No; but one of the great objects, one of the prime merits of both, is to train and prepare the rising generation for the hands of the Clergyman, to facilitate thereby his labour, and to make the necessity of public exhibition less frequent. But still his constant supervisal and personal direction of the whole machinery are equally, or more than ever demanded—they are, I had nearly said, all in all. Through him, moreover, the children are to profess, in Church, what they have been taught in the school, and he is bound not merely to listen to a formal and cold repetition, but also in the fullest sense of the term, to 'examine, and to instruct.'"

With respect to the first cause assigned, I can easily understand that the younger clergy may learn to entertain a contemptible opinion of that which their elders and superiors refuse to practise.

Where it is the custom to commit the sacred charge as a work of drudgery, to lay persons, whose habits, condition, and attainments, are unequal to it,—there it may be concluded, that inexperienced and unreflecting Clergymen will be indisposed to enter upon a work, which has been rendered distasteful by neglect and abuse. But will the Church of England ever sink so low, as that the great body of her ministers shall openly hold in contempt a practice, which has been sanctified by the example of Evangelists and Apostles, and of men eminent for their rank in the Church, for their piety and attainments, from the first preaching of the Gospel to the present hour? To devote public and private attention to the young, and the ignorant, and the dull,—to explain to these the first principles of Christianity, by a slow and wearisome process,—to question, and to consent to be questioned in the face of the congregation,—to have recourse to one expedient after another, for the purpose of touching the heart, or stirring up the conscience, or enlightening the understanding,—to aim every discourse at the same mark,—to adapt the system to different tempers and capacities,—and never to consider the work done, until every term used is thoroughly understood,—every vow and promise distinctly explained, and every condition of the covenant made plain,—this may be laborious, and trying, and oftentimes disheartening, but it never can be pronounced inconsistent with the dignity of the most elevated station.

CATECHISING PRACTISED BY THE APOSTLES AND THEIR SUCCESSORS.

I have said that the Apostles and Evangelists themselves did not disdain that patient, simple, and interrogatory mode of instruction, which is called catechising.* Added to the concurrent voice of antiquity † to this effect, we have the more unquestionable evidence of Scripture, gathered from the application of the Greek word, from whence the term now in use is derived.

Fortified with this etymological argument, it was the opinion of Cave and Grotius,‡ that St. Peter alluded to the

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* It was principally by catechising, that the religion of Jesus, as Hegesippus observes, was in a few years spread over the greater part of the known world.—*Bishop Mant.*

By catechising, under heaven, was planted the Apostolical Church; by catechising, the sound of the Gospel was sent forth into all lands. —*Archdeacon Bayley.*

St. Paul's converts had all been instructed in the faith, as the custom was catechetically.—*Rev. J. B. Sumner.*

† The author of the Epistle called "Clementis ad Jacobum Epistola," (who, at all events, expressed the traditionary belief of the early Church, at whatever period he himself may have lived,) professes to give an account of St. Peter's last charge, in which the Apostle is made to speak of himself, as having catechised at Rome. "They who catechise, should be well rooted in the faith, for the salvation of men's souls is at stake. Wherefore it is important that he who administers, and teaches, shall accommodate himself to the various opinions and dispositions of such as he may have to teach. It is indispensable that a catechist be learned, blameless, practised and perspicuous in his mode of instruction. Such as you will find Clement to be, who, when I am gone, will succeed me."—*Clem. ad Jac. Epist. apud Cot. Pat.* p. 619.

‡ Bingham's Orig. Sacr. B. xi. ch. 7. 5. 3.

catechetical system, when he spoke of the "answer of a good conscience towards God:" and it has been thought still more probable, that Philip's conversation with the eunuch, before he baptized him, had some reference to the Apostolical practice of teaching by question and answer. Cyril distinctly relates, in terms, that St. Paul *catechised*. "Paul," says he, "preached the Gospel from Jerusalem to Illyria, and taught at Rome *catechetically*."* [κατηχησαντα.] *Cyril, Catechesis*, xvii. 16.

This statement receives strong confirmation from the two last verses of Acts xxviii. "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, [at Rome,] and received all that came unto him, *preaching* the kingdom of God, and *teaching* those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." There is manifestly meant to be, in this passage, an account of two modes which the Apostle adop-

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* St. Paul's general style affords evidence to this effect. From the 2d chapter to the end of the 12th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, there appears a manner of putting his subject, which is peculiarly characteristic of the Apostle, who, according to Cyril, *catechised* at Rome. For example—

Q. What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Rom. iii. 1.

A. Much every way—chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. V. 2.

Q. For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? V. 3.

A. God forbid. Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar, as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. V. 4.

Q. What, then, are we better than they? V. 9.

A. No, in no wise, for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. V. 9. &c. &c.

ted of promulgating the faith. Comparing it with Acts v. 42,—"they ceased not to *teach*, and *preach* Jesus Christ,"—with Acts xv. 35,—"Paul and Barnabas continued in Antioch, *teaching* and *preaching* the word of the Lord,"—and with 1 Tim. i. 11, "Whereunto I am appointed a *preacher*, and an *apostle*, and a *teacher*,"—and finding that the term itself, CATECHISE,* is used three times by St. Paul himself, and four times by St. Luke,† the sacred historian of St. Paul,—I can have no doubt that the catechetical form of teaching was adopted by the Apostles as the most efficient, though the most humble and fatiguing method, of explaining the first principles of the Gospel. St. Paul's charge to Timothy was, that he should be "*apt to teach*," [διδακτικον] (twice this expression was repeated,) "*in meekness instructing*,"‡ [παιδευοντα.]

THE ATTENTION PAID TO IT BY THE EARLY CHURCH.

In conformity with this precept, the highest officers in the primitive Church, and the most distinguished of her ornaments, exercised the functions of Catechists, with a spirit that took delight in teaching even the first elements,—with gentleness that could not be moved by the perverseness of their catechumens, and with patience which was proof against all fatigue or disgust.

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* See the Introduction.

† Luke i. 4. Acts xviii. 25. xxi. 21, 24. Rom. ii. 18. 1 Cor. xiv. 19. Gal. vi. 6.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

"The chair of the catechist of old was filled by the highest authorities, the finest talents, and the deepest learning,"* and among the number of those whom I would bring to the recollection of such as undervalue the humble task of interrogatory instruction, was Pantænus.† His taste in elegant and classic literature was so refined, that he was called the "Sicilian bee" by his contemporaries; and there is an incident in his life, which, connected with his literary acquirements, may induce not a few to take more than common interest in his history. Like our own lamented Heber, he made a sacrifice of his dearest interests, and went a voluntary Missionary to India. Though Alexandria, the place of his abode, contained all that could gratify a mind ardent in the pursuit of science and letters, yet he cheerfully regarded an invitation by some Indian Ambassadors, as a call of Providence, and journeyed to regions beyond the Indus, with that singleness of purpose, which proved his heart to be with the Author and Finisher of his faith, and chose a rugged path which nothing could smooth, but the strongest sense of Christian duty.

Clemens Alexandrinus, Heraclias, afterwards Bishop of Alexandria, and Origen, were Catechists; and the latter was so eminently successful in proceeding upon the golden rule, line upon line, and precept upon precept, that he not only achieved conversions among the more ignorant and uninformed, but among accomplished scholars.‡ Heathen philosophers, and Christians by outward profession, who had departed from the purer doctrines of the Gospel, were brought to the obedience of the Cross, by listening acciden-

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* Archdeacon Bayley. † Κατηχήσεως προεστη διδασκαλείου. Euseb.
‡ Euseb. vi. 18.

tally to the close questions which he put to his catechumens, and to the truth which he illustrated through their answers. This is one of the important advantages resulting from public catechising. The instructor reaches the hearts and consciences of by-standers, through queries and observations meant for young neophytes. The simplicity of the Gospel thus triumphs unexpectedly over the wisdom of the wise; and praise is perfected out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, for "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things that are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things, which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence."

It will be enough to mention two other names, selected from the Fathers, of men, renowned in their generation, who thought it no condescension to labour in furtherance of that sacred ordinance, which your Lordship has taken such pains to press upon the attention of your Clergy. Cyril of Jerusalem, and Augustine of Hippo, are no mean names in the annals of the Church. The first has left behind him proofs in his "Catechesis," that a catechist's duties are not the least important among the pastoral functions. The second assisted the labours of a young deacon by a treatise on Catechising, which none can read without feeling all the best energies of his nature invited to exercise themselves in the same department of the Lord's vineyard.

THE OPINIONS OF THE EARLY REFORMERS, AND OTHER EMINENT MEN.

As nothing extended the doctrines of the primitive Church more than diligent Catechising, so has the enlargement of the Protestant faith been effected by the same means. From the earliest dawn of the Reformation, there has never been a time, when its zealous advocates have entirely neglected it. The sixteenth century produced a host of catechists and catechisms. Luther wrote two, and declared that catechising afforded him more delight than any other duty.* I have already noticed what was done in England, to promote this service, in the infancy of the Established Church; and however lax at different periods may have been the conduct of too great a portion of the Clergy of the land, yet the sentiments and the practice of our more distinguished divines have always been in this respect strictly Apostolical.

"There is no employment in the world," says Bishop Hall, "wherein God's ministers can so profitably employ themselves, as in this of plain and familiar catechising. What is a building without a foundation? If this groundwork therefore be not surely laid, all their divine discourses (for such their sermons are) lie upon the loose sand, and are easily washed away by the insinuative suggestions of false teachers. As for matter of belief, where the foundation is surely laid of the doctrines of faith, contained in the *Apostolic*, *Nicene*, *Athanasian Creeds;* and of the doctrine of the Sacraments, briefly comprised in our publicly allowed catechism; I see no reason but to think our peo-

* See Mant's Notes on the Catechism.

ple so sufficiently defenced against the danger of error, that no heretical machinations could be able to batter or undermine them. And surely, if ever there were or can be a time, wherein this duty of catechising were fit to be enforced, it is this upon which we are fallen, when the souls of Christian people are so hard laid at, not only by *Popery*, *Anabaptism*, *Antinomianism*, *Pelagianism;* but by the confounding and hellish heresies of *Socinianism*, *Antitrinitarianism*, prodigious mischiefs; tending not only to the disturbance of our peace, but to the utter destruction of Christianity."—*From the Peace Maker.*—Sec. 23.

"There is no one thing of which I repent so much," said the same prelate, "as not to have bestowed *more hours in this public exercise of catechising; in regard whereof I could quarrel with my very sermons*, and wish that a great part of them had been exchanged for this preaching conference."

"Great scholars," said the celebrated Usher, in a Sermon preached before king James the First, "possibly may think, that it stands not so well with their credit to stoop thus low, and to spend so much of their time in teaching these rudiments and first principles of the doctrine of Christ. But they should consider, that the laying the foundation skilfully, as it is the matter of greatest importance in the whole building, so it is the very masterpiece of the wisest builder. *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation;* saith the great Apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 10. And let the learnedest of all try it whenever we please, we shall find, that to lay the ground-work rightly (that is, to apply ourselves unto the capacity of the common auditory, and to make an ignorant man understand these mysteries in some

good measure) will put us to the trial of our skill, and trouble us a great deal more, than if we were to discuss a controversy, or handle a subtle point of learning in the schools.

There is every reason to believe, that Herbert's character of "the Country Parson" was drawn from real life. His biographer, Isaac Walton, relates, that his own conduct was a practical comment upon the rules which he laid down in that delightful treatise. "In his first sermon to his parishioners, he made it his humble request, that they would be constant to the afternoon's service and catechising, and showed them convincing reasons why he desired it; and his obliging example and persuasions, brought them to a conformity to his desires." With this evidence before us, we may conclude that his twenty-first chapter, entitled, "the Parson Catechising," is an exact description of the manner in which the most able and pious Clergy of that period, were in the habit of performing this duty.

"The country parson values catechising highly,—he useth and preferreth the ordinary Church Catechism, partly for obedience to authority, partly for uniformity sake, that the same common truths may be every where professed, especially since many remove from parish to parish, who like Christian soldiers, are to give the word, and to satisfy the congregation by their Catholic answers. He exacts of all the doctrines of the Catechism: of the younger sort the very words: of the elder, the substance. Those he catechiseth publicly; these privately, giving age honour, according to the apostle's rules. He requires all to be present at catechising: first for the authority of the work, secondly, that parents and masters, as they hear the answers prove, may, when they come home, either commend

or reprove, either reward or punish: thirdly, that those of the elder sort, who are not well grounded, may then by an honourable way, take occasion to be better instructed; fourthly, that those who are well grown in the knowledge of religion, may examine their grounds, review their errors, and by occasion of both enlarge their meditations. When once all have learnt the words of the Catechism, he thinks it the most useful way that a pastor can take, to go over the same, but in other words. How many say the catechism by rote, as parrots, without ever piercing into the sense of it. In this course the order of the catechism would be kept, but the rest varied, as thus: In the Creed, —How came this world to be as it is? Was it made, or came it by chance? Who made it? Did you see God make it? Then there are some things to be believed that are not seen? Is this the nature of belief? Is not Christianity full of such things as are not to be seen, but believed? You said God made the world; Who is God? and so forward, requiring answers to all these, and helping and cherishing the answerer, by making the questions very plain by comparisons, and making much even of a word of truth from him."

Baxter, though a non-conformist, attributed much of his success at Kidderminster to his adherence to catechising, as a regular system. "When I set upon a personal conference with each family," said he, "and catechising them, there were very few families in all the town, that refused to come."

Bishop Burnet catechised three times a week, while he was the incumbent of Saltown in Scotland, and even after his consecration to the see of Salisbury, he examined the youth of the two great schools of the town in the cathedral

Church, every week during the season of Lent. To enumerate all the great names, Wake, Secker, &c., who have dedicated their labours to the same cause, would be to adduce a "cloud of witnesses" to its expediency.

THE SUPPOSED DIFFICULTIES OF CATECHISING.

Another cause, which the late Bishop Law, thought might have its effect in contributing to the neglect of catechising, is one, which in the present age cannot be fairly admitted. "Some deterred by its difficulties have not the resolution." There are so many helps in the shape of expositions and illustrations of the Catechism, and the parish minister is, in most places, so accustomed to address young persons, in the common examinations, during his superintendence of National or Sunday Schools, that it would be a reproach to the Clergy, to allow any weight whatever to such a plea. Timidity and hesitation there naturally will be on the part of many, whose duty calls them to stand forth in the face of a congregation, and to deliver such unpremeditated observations, as the nature of a child's answer may require: but very little practice, and a heart fairly enlisted in the service, will soon give both confidence to the mind, and utterance to the tongue. We are not to suppose that an audience, collected together to hear youth and ignorance instructed in the elements of Christianity, are nice and critical. If the tone and manner of the teacher, and the pains which he takes to make himself understood, render it manifest that he is thoroughly in earnest, any little particular deficiencies will be overlooked, and the gene-

ral effect only will be noticed. A broken discourse, and remarks arising out of circumstances, and replies which occur at the moment, are not so likely to weary hearers, as a continued lecture; and for this reason a diffident Clergyman may enter upon his catechetical work with much less apprehension of being tiresome, than when he has to deliver a sermon. He cannot express himself too plainly; he has no occasion whatever to study language or style. As long as he is unaffected, audible, and intelligible, he is sure to interest his listeners,* who will not be dissatisfied even with that which is familiar and common place, because they are aware, that the instructor has to address himself principally to those, who require first principles, and come for milk, and not for strong meat.

My Lord, it is a remark, which has lately been put forth in print, in more than one form of publication, "that religious knowledge is more eagerly sought for, and more generally diffused,"—that "Religion has a much stronger hold on the affections of the English nation now," than in preceding times,—that we live in an age, when many jealous and observant eyes are upon us,—that much is expected of us,—and that to the ordinary obligations, religious and civil, which the ministers of our Church have always been expected to observe, are superadded, the obligations arising from the increased and increasing force of public opinion.

Such being the admitted fact, it would seem that any parochial Clergyman, who should undertake to restore the system of catechising, according to the plan which your Lordship has suggested, namely "by improving the practice by such modifications as would render it popular as well as useful," would have all the encouragement that a

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[* "Experto crede Roberto"—trust and try.—*Am. Ed.*]

grateful flock could give him, in full attendance both of young and old, high and low, rich and poor, one with another, in manifestation of awakened hopes and fears, and in general improvement throughout the parish. There would be no unwillingness either in parent or child, master or apprentice, to wait upon the teaching of a Clergyman, whose kind and affectionate earnestness in the cause, and efficient mode of explanation, should offer some pledge, that they would be the happier and better for it. To insure success to his experiment, he has only to treat his Catechumens as thinking and reflecting beings, and not as mere mechanical creatures, who are assembled around him to repeat for the hundredth time, what they have repeated ninety-nine times before. Children as well as grown persons, may be made to understand, that they have a personal interest in the Christian covenant: and as the preacher's first care should be to rouse each of his hearers to a sense of his own individual concern in that which is addressed to him, so should the Catechist's be, to lead his young charge to employ their thoughts about themselves, to tempt them to think, and to prevail on them to exercise their minds upon that which they have been reading or learning. Who shall limit the period of life, when a desire to obey the Gospel may become the active principle of the soul? The highest authority has spoken of childhood as an age of docility. God has implanted even in infancy a natural curiosity about himself and the things of eternity: and we are encouraged by the brightest promises of success to try the experiment, which the Church invites and commands us to make.*

[* This whole paragraph deserves the serious consideration of the Clergy.—*Am. Ed.*]

PRACTICAL ADOPTION OF THE PROPOSED SYSTEM.

The consecration of the new Church, in Somer's Town, St. Pancras, to which I was appointed Minister in May, 1826, afforded me an ample opportunity of making the experiment of public catechising upon the scale, and with the modifications, which your Lordship's Charge had recommended. The scene of duty presented a view of all the disadvantages, and all the advantages, under which a parochial Clergyman may be supposed to be placed. If there was much to encounter, there was a wide field for useful exertion. Somer's Town forms one of the districts of a very extensive and populous parish, which is said to be seventeen miles in circuit, and to contain not less than eighty thousand souls. The population of St. Pancras has been increasing rapidly during the last forty years; and, until very lately, its provision for the due performance of Church Services was of the most limited kind. The small and ancient mother-Church will not accommodate a congregation of three hundred. The new parochial chapel, in Kentish Town, is situated at a great distance from the body of the population. Yet such were the conflicting opinions, that tended to dissever the people more and more from their constituted pastor, that the exemplary and indefatigable Dr. Middleton, late Bishop of Calcutta, was unable to realize the hope that lay nearest to his heart, and to accomplish the construction of a new edifice, capable of holding a congregation in any degree proportionable to the magnitude of the parish. His successor, Dr. Moore, has been more fortunate, and his incumbency has been distinguished not only by the completion of one of the finest and largest parish Churches in London, but by the erection of

three additional Churches, or parochial chapels, capable of receiving from fifteen hundred to two thousand persons each; viz. one at Camden Town, another in Regent Square, and a third in Somer's Town. The influence, the activity, and the zeal, which have enabled the present Vicar to achieve so much for the interests of the Church, and for the spiritual welfare of his parishioners, are such as entitle him to the highest consideration.

This brief sketch, of the state of the parish of St. Pancras, will sufficiently explain that a newly-appointed minister, to either of these Churches, might have some reason to fear, that he was not entering upon an easy cure, where he would find all things made smooth for his career. Such was found to be the case at the opening of the new Church in Somer's Town; and the statement, that I am now making, is necessary to a proper understanding of the course which I was impelled to adopt. A thin congregation, which became much more thin in the afternoon, and free seats not half occupied, constituted no bright prospect. Even those few sheep in the wilderness did not belong to one fold,—the scanty flock was made up of many who came out of curiosity, or from a distance, or with very unsettled notions of unity. It was evidently not entirely composed of persons in regular communion with the Establishment.

The want of school-children to assist in the singing, and responses, was another evil, of no small weight in the scale. The children of the well-conducted St. Pancras National School resorted in a body to the parish Church; and there were reasons, why even a small detachment could not conveniently be spared to assist at the services in Somer's Town.

Upon casting about to ascertain the probable causes of the many empty seats, which continued, for the first two or three Sundays, to excite uneasiness, I discovered them in the condition and various denominations of the majority of the inhabitants of the district. There are several families of great respectability in Somer's Town, and its vicinity, and from these the Clergyman may look to receive every attention; but for the most part the houses are of an inferior description, occupied in separate floors and apartments, by tenants who often shift their abode, and become unaccustomed to hold any regular communication with parochial Clergy. Very many of these occupants are dissenters, of all sects, and a large proportion of them are Roman Catholics. During the war, Somer's Town was the resort of French emigrants; and it is now the receptacle of Spanish and Italian refugees. There is no part of the metropolis, where the Roman Catholics have more prosperous establishments than here. A chapel of old standing, and now undergoing considerable enlargement,—a corps of zealous, able, and well-educated priests, who leave no means untried to make proselytes,* and "two nu-

* At the same time that I put forth the following statements, I distinctly disavow any intention of charging the Roman Catholic Clergy of the neighbourhood of Somer's Town, with having had any hand in the transactions alluded to. They may pass without their agency: the only acts of theirs, which have come to my knowledge, are in the fair course of professional zeal, and I heartily wish that all our own priesthood would take equal pains to *seek*, as well as to save. The spirit of avowed hostility is so busy at work in Somer's Town, on the part of Roman Catholics, that there have been circulated not less than eight thousand six hundred tracts within this district during the past year, of which the greatest proportion is calculated not so much to confirm the truth of their own tenets, as

merous schools of gratuitous education for the poor," to quote their own report,—these form an effective phalanx in the very centre of the position assigned to the district minister. A large academy for Roman Catholic children,

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to turn ours into derision, and therefore evidently intended more for the perusal of loose Protestants, than of professed Papists. Of an inflammatory and ribald tract, in four pages, entitled, "Monkish Superstition and Modern Improvements," more than nine hundred have been distributed. This tract is headed by a wood-cut, representing men harnessed like horses, and compelled by an overseer, armed with an enormous whip, to draw carts on the road. The text, illustrative of the print, asserts, that "women as well as men have been set to repair the roads in Sussex and Hampshire."

According to the statement of a printed schedule of distribution, 550 is the number circulated of "The modern method of converting Idolators, by Bible Saints," adorned by a plate, in which Protestant disputants are drawn in the act of assailing the Papists, sword and bayonet in hand—500 of "Protestant Inquisition," 400 of "Samples of the Blessings of the Reformation," 150 of "Tolerance of the Law Church." Another notable treatise, which has found its way by hundreds into the district, is "a Review of Fox's Book of Martyrs:" this is decorated with a print, under which the publishers have been at the trouble to give the following description—"Explanation of the engraving. John Fox is seen writing his book, originally called Acts and Monuments, but now metamorphosed into a Book of Martyrs. The devil is looking over his shoulder prompting him, for under no other influence but that of an evil spirit could he write, since he has been convicted of falsehood by father Parsons, who charges him with telling directly and indirectly not less than ten thousand lies in this work. In the perspective is a printing press chained, to denote that it was shut to the Catholics by the operation of the Penal Code, as will be seen in the course of the present work." It is well that the Clergy of the metropolis should know how busily Roman Catholic agents are employed in their parishes. 72,000 of similar tracts were circulated in London last year.

whose parents can afford to pay for their education, adjoins the new parochial chapel.

Under such circumstances as these, it was manifest that there could be no chance of making a ministry as extensively useful as the place required, but by becoming personally, and accessibly known, to as many as would be willing to profit by such intercourse. But how was this to be done? By whom could the introduction be made? Unlike a country parish, the inhabitants of a London district are unknown to each other; they hold but little communication; they are not neighbours, to say to each other, Have you conversed with the Clergyman? I will bring him to you. From one end to another of the district it was a land of strangers; and the common mode of getting at the well disposed, and at those in error, would have demanded an interval of several months, before any apparent good could result. Preaching would not suffice, because there were comparatively but few hearers, and those few needed proofs of the Clergyman's devotion to the sacred cause beyond his energy in the pulpit. An immediate lever was wanted to move the feelings and affections of the people. It was now that your Lordship's Charge recurred to my mind in all its force.

"The Liturgical formularies of the Church,—conceived on an accurate notion of the relation between the pastor and his flock, are designed to connect them by a regular intercourse, and to direct the conduct of both parties in the performance of their respective duties. As THE GROUNDWORK OF THIS PLAN, IT IS HER PECULIAR OBJECT TO BRING THE PARISHIONER, FROM HIS EARLIEST DAYS, INTO IMMEDIATE CONTACT WITH HIS SPIRITUAL TEACHER AND GUIDE."

I saw that I must go back to first principles,—that I

must tread in the humble, and almost forsaken path of the Catechist,—that I must yield substantial obedience to a rule, which, if duly observed, would help me to attain my object.

But fresh difficulties presented themselves; how was I to get at the children, when I was unknown to their parents, and unable to find my way to houses, where the voice of a Clergyman of the Church would be heard in preference to that of any other? The National School of which I have previously spoken, offered me none of the facilities which I required.

The more I contemplated my position, the more plainly did I perceive the necessity of making my way to notice and esteem, by being the immediate origin of some method, not yet in practice in this particular quarter; of opening a fountain of elementary religious instruction, which had not yet sprung up; of training some children, who should be exclusively indebted to myself for some advantages; of forming a plan for which parents and families would have reason to be grateful; and who, beginning to love me for the concern I had shown in behalf of their little ones,* would at length be led to ask themselves, May not we too become better by going to him for instruction?

While I was in doubt as to the exact course to be pursued, it came to my knowledge that the master of an extensive Lancasterian school in Somer's Town, was a member of the Church of England, and sincerely disposed to promote my views. He had been one of the Catechists under the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, in North America, and came home with strong recommen-

[* The true secret, humanly speaking, of pastoral influence.—*Am. Ed.*]

dations to the National School Society. But not finding employment so soon as his circumstances required, he accepted an offer which placed him at the head of this Lancasterian institution. The number of boys and girls instructed there, amounted at the time to more than five hundred, of whom it was represented to me, that many, being children of parents in communion with the Established Church, might be persuaded to come to Church, and to form a Sunday school. The master himself undertook to bring such as should be willing to attend, and to devote his Sundays to whatever mode of instruction I might choose to adopt.

With these elements my system began, and on the first Sunday after the arrangement, the master presented himself at the head of about seventy children, who were gathered together near the altar, after the afternoon sermon, and prepared by classification for future operations. They were not then catechised, for scarcely one could say any part of the Church Catechism. It was explained to them, that their attendance would be required every Sunday morning, at nine o'clock, in the Church, that their first business would be to learn the Catechism, and that prayer books would be given, or sold at very reduced prices, to such as should entitle themselves to the privilege by regular application and proficiency. On the following Sunday the number of voluntary scholars was increased, and several of them had learned enough of their lesson to undergo a respectable examination in the Chancel. The wheels of the machine were now in motion; but that they might not drag heavily, I began at once by infusing a little variety into the exercise, and instead of confining my enquiries to the Catechism, I put questions and made obser-

vations relating to the Morning and Evening Services, which interested the children, and removed every appearance of unpleasant task-work.

For some months the teacher of the Lancasterian school continued to act as the very efficient master of this my Sunday School; but at the beginning of last year, he declined the office, partly from a desire of having the one only day in the week, which he could call his own, a day of perfect leisure, and partly from some apprehension lest he should excite disagreeable surmises in the minds of the persons connected with the management of the weekly school, his principal dependence. It is the regulation in that school, that no particular form of religion should be taught, and it is possible he had reason to fear, that some suspicions might be entertained of his preparing the Church of England boys for their Sunday examinations, by a process carried on in the course of the week, during school hours, inconsistent with the spirit of the Lancasterian system. Be this as it may, the Committee of that establishment, so far from manifesting any open jealousy, or from throwing obstacles in the way of my Sunday School, do, to this day, promote it, by continuing to pay a young woman five pounds a year, for her services on the Sabbath, in superintending the conduct of such of their female children as attend Church during the hours of instruction and of divine service. She is in no other way connected with them.

In a very short time, all the advantages which your Lordship has predicted as being likely to result from "an improved modification of the ancient and laudable practice of catechising children in Church," displayed themselves in the District committed to my charge. What these ad-

vantages were, I shall describe more fully in their proper place. But I may now briefly state, that from the day I commenced catechising, until the present time, it has been regularly pursued every Sunday, without any omission, either by myself, or by the assistant minister, Mr. Judkin, or by both of us in conjunction, at the conclusion of the afternoon sermon; and that a full congregation,—an intercourse opened, and established with a great part of the inhabitants of the District,—and a Sunday School increased from 77 to 280, and still increasing, are the results.

Now for the modifications suggested and adopted.

IN WHAT RESPECTS THE OLD PRACTICE MAY BE MODIFIED AND IMPROVED.

Your Lordship did not speak of modifications and improvements in the ancient practice, without giving us some further insight into your own ideas of a mode of catechising, suitable to the habits and feelings of modern times.

I. "A short space *before* or *after* the Church Service, devoted to the examination of the children."* And,

II. An "examination judiciously interspersed with short explanations, which might be generally edifying to the congregation, leaving these matters to the judgment of individual Clergymen, and the suggestions of local circumstances."†

These were the groundworks proposed in your Lordship's Charges, as substitutions for the half-hour prescribed

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* Charge of 1822, p. 27.

† Charge of 1822, p. 27.

by the rubric, after the second Lesson at Evening Prayer, and for the dry custom of confining the ordinance to a repetition of question and answer, as set down in the Catechism. Upon these I have acted.

I. THE TIME OF CATECHISING.

In regard to the first improvement; I have preferred a space immediately *after* the Evening Service, because there can then be no interruption whatever to the congregation, and the time employed may depend entirely upon circumstances, i. e. upon the nature of the examination, and upon the interest which is taken in it. If the children and bystanders show no symptoms of weariness, it may be lengthened at pleasure; whereas a space before the Evening Prayers must necessarily terminate, when the hour for prayer shall arrive. Another consideration in favour of this choice, is, the better chance of having more hearers to derive benefit from the service. When the people observe that there is something going on, and that one and another stays behind, the inclination to remain becomes pretty general, and the catechist has the satisfaction of finding that he is surrounded by a numerous audience. I have found this to be the case invariably; a very large proportion of the congregation, of the superior orders, of servants, of young persons, and the parents of the children who are to be examined, remain in their places, or approach the chancel to listen to the questions and answers.

Again, there can be no appearance of fastidious impatience to dishearten the Clergyman, when he catechises

after the prayers and sermon,* because every person who stops to hear him does so by choice, and can go away at any moment he pleases. There is nothing indecorous, either in not staying to witness the examination, or in retiring from it before it is concluded; so that the perfect and unrestrained liberty, to go or to stop, renders it an attendance entirely optional.

II. THE INTERSPERSED EXPLANATIONS, AND THE MIXED CHARACTER OF THE PRACTICE.

As soon as I discovered that I had succeeded in divesting the examination of all irksomeness † to the young persons principally concerned, I began to draw more largely upon their time and industry, by expressing a desire that in the course of every week, and in addition to portions of the Catechism, and expositions of it, they would learn by heart, or at least read attentively, the Collect, the Lessons, and the Gospel of the next Sunday, so as to be prepared to answer questions relating to the sacred narrative, pre-

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[* It is on every account far better to substitute the catechetical exercise for the Sermon. See page 25 of this volume.—*Am. Ed.*]

† "Your instructions should be given mildly and cheerfully. They should not be given with a magisterial air, or in the way of a *solemn lecture*, where the hearer is kept, as it were, at a distance, and not allowed to propose, or to answer questions. All angry or threatening expressions are to be carefully avoided. When instructions are given with a dogmatical air, an austere aspect, and attended with threats, children are discouraged from attempting to learn."—"*Religious Instruction of Children*," *by Rev. Sir J. Stonehouse.*

cepts, and doctrines therein contained. I have not made a practice of fixing their attention upon the Epistles, considering them to be beyond the understanding of children, nor have I selected the Lessons out of the Old Testament, so often as those which are taken from the Gospels. In short the latter, with the Gospel of the day, have constituted our principal exercise; and it has rarely happened, that I have asked the children to commit any Scriptural passage to memory, without having had the satisfaction of finding many of them able to repeat it at our next meeting. The willingness, the delight, the emulation, which is exhibited Sunday after Sunday, is as affecting as it is encouraging; and I am quite sure that the majority of the children would be extremely grieved, if the system, after being adopted, should be abandoned.

METHODS OF RENDERING CATECHISING ATTRACTIVE.

But how is the interest of the children so excited, and how is their attention so engaged, in the first instance, that they become willing learners? Public praise, and rewards given in the face of the congregation; and the reverse,—rebukes, mildly delivered, and expected privileges withheld, have wonderful effect. I have made it a rule to give no distinction to displays of talent, unless they be accompanied by good behaviour. If a child answer ever so well, he is not noticed, unless he has behaved well; and none are permitted to purchase Bibles, Testaments, or Prayer-books, unless they can produce tickets of merit, and of regular attendance. Almost every Sabbath the master of

the Sunday School puts into my hand books, which certain of the children have qualified themselves to possess, partly by tickets of merit, of an assigned pecuniary value, and partly by purchase; and these are delivered to them at the end of the service, with a few words of commendation. No less than twenty-nine Bibles, five Testaments, and one hundred and twenty Prayer-books, have been earned by the youthful aspirants, in this way, during the past year; and no doubt they set a high value upon them after being thus obtained.

But there are two other more effective modes yet, which I know by experience tend greatly to secure the attention of such as are capable of reflection. The first is to convince them that we ourselves are in earnest, that we have their interest at heart,—that it is entirely for their sakes that we take the trouble of instructing them.* The second is to make them feel in earnest about themselves,—to awaken a serious inquisitiveness, about their own present and eternal condition, and to show them, that what we have to say on matters of religion concerns every one of them personally.

The congregation is edified by these means quite as much* as the juvenile circle which is more immediately

* "Let your children see that you take *pleasure* in *instructing* them. A mild speech and cheerful countenance are perfectly consistent with great seriousness of spirit, and with keeping up a proper authority. Let them see that all your advice proceeds from *love*. Let nothing rough and morose appear in your instructions; but show all gentleness, which will give weight and influence to every thing you say."—*Sir J. Stonehouse's Instructions.*

[† "You think that you are teaching the children," said a shrewd observer, "and so you are; but the congregation much more."—*Am. Ed.*]

addressed. The home-questions which are put to the children, the by-standers, in their turn, apply to their own hearts and consciences. For example; a child has been repeating the Collect for the fourth Sunday after Lent, "Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished," &c. &c. The question naturally arises, and may be addressed to one of tender years, "Have *you* committed any evil deeds, for which *you* deserve punishment?" After a short pause, the Catechist himself may proceed to give the answer; "Yes, unhappily, young as you are, you have broken some of God's commandments. When you have irreverently pronounced his holy name,—when you have acted disobediently to your parents,—when you have wished for that which does not belong to you, you have done what is displeasing to Almighty God. Now you shall see how the language of the Collect, which adds, 'By the comfort of thy grace may be relieved,' agrees with the Catechism, where it directs you to pray for divine help. 'My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve him, without his special grace.'"

I have often noticed with considerable pleasure, how the attention of individuals, arrived at maturity, is riveted, when they discover, that the lessons of their earliest association contain notes which now strike to their heart; and which they feel would have responded there at a more tender age, had they been skilfully touched. Whether a congregation be listening to a preacher or a catechist, as long as the topics of a discourse are directed to that, in which all have the same personal concern, be they young or old, the speaker is sure to have willing hearers, whose con-

sciences will not suffer their "taste to be fastidious." Every excited hope or fear puts the mind on the alert—every new perception and acquirement gives pleasure,—and the by-stander and the catechumen are equally attentive as soon as they discover that they can apply religious maxims to their own case; that they can draw from their own hearts or conduct proofs of the truth of the doctrines that are delivered to them.

Nothing can be more erroneous, than to limit catechetical lessons to the mere heartless business of ascertaining whether the formularies have been committed to memory, under the idea, that childhood being the season for the mechanical process only, we must wait for riper years, before the word engrafted on the memory can be expected to engage the heart and the understanding, in a salutary inquiry after truth. Why is memory to be considered the only active power of the youthful mind? Why is it to be supposed that the child can retain forms of words, but not impressions of hope, fear, love, desire, and longings after a heavenly state of things? Why may he not be supposed to feel and to digest, to compare, and to weigh eternity against the present?

An authority, [Bishop Wilson] whose opinion has been permitted to carry great weight in all questions of this kind, declared that he would neither suspend, nor retard the important work of instructing a rational and immortal being in the concerns, that interest his soul: that he would make the understanding travel on with the mechanical process of learning by heart. He insisted that "*children being the most proper subjects of an education which regards another life*," we should never cease to put people in mind, that the object of religious education is to "make children Christians in *deed*

as well as in *name*." His expressions are too strong to allow us to mistake his meaning: he adds, "*lest not knowing or not feeling the power of religion in their souls*," they become a scandal to their education. "My meaning," says he, "is this; children may be, and often have been, taught the general truths and duties of Christianity, without any great good following, for want of such previous knowledge and dispositions as we have been speaking of, such as are necessary to fit them for RECEIVING THE TRUTH IN THE LOVE OF IT."

In another place he asks, "Should not this be our first and great concern? To plant the fear of God in their hearts betimes," namely:

"By giving them a just and distinct knowledge of God and his attributes.

"By making them sensible of the relation they bear to him, and that they are accountable to his justice for every thing they do.

"By explaining to them the condition they are brought into, by the fall of our first parents.

"By *showing* THEM TO THEMSELVES, *and convincing them from* THEIR OWN REASON, *and experience, that "things are wretchedly amiss in them.*"*

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* See Bishop Wilson's "Sermon, preached at the Anniversary Meeting of the Children Educated in the Charity Schools about the Cities of London and Westminster, May 28, 1724."

The Bishop's text to this Sermon stands thus:

Acts xiii. 48. "As many as were ordained to [*that is, disposed or prepared for,*] eternal life, believed."

I cannot withhold my expression of pleasure at seeing the Calvinistic rendering *ordained* met boldly, and effectually corrected, *in limine*, at the very outset of this Sermon. "For," as the Right

Now it must be quite manifest, that if there be any reason and wisdom in these observations, a formal, forced, and artificial system of catechising, in which there is no departure from a set form of words, and no personal application of the maxims to the individual under examination, cannot exercise the mind of the respondent in a sufficiently profitable manner. Ask a child who has been for years repeating our Church summary of doctrine, to give you in his own language an answer to the simplest doctrinal question, and he will look confused and stupid, unless the same pains have been taken to make the sense reach his understanding, as to convey the sounds to his ears.

By following the rules laid down by all, who have seriously considered the subject, that is, by exercising the intellect and feelings, as well as the organs of hearing, the understandings of children will gradually open, their hearts will take part in the service, and their conduct and answers

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Rev. Author well said, "if the opinion be true, which has sometimes been founded on this text, it would render all education, with regard to another world, useless." In many other instances, I could almost venture to say, in *all*, where the terms, *ordained*, *foreordained*, *predestinated*, *foreknew*, &c., occur in the Authorized Version, and are wrested to imply some doctrine of *necessity*, of personal election, or rejection, it will be found by reference to the Greek, that they admit of a very different construction. A philological investigation, with a sound knowledge of grammar and derivation, would do more to shake the authority of Calvinistic readings of Scripture, than any mode of reasoning whatever. One hint to the reader shall suffice. Let him trace the Greek preposition ΠΡΟ, through its different acceptations, and then let him search for the meaning of the Apostle, by interpreting προθεσιν, προέγνω, προώρισε, (see Romans viii.) according to grammatical and etymological rules; and I think he will not be likely to rise from the inquiry—a confirmed Predestinarian.

will become more and more natural, and more in conformity with the grand object to be attained. It must be so; for when truths, in unison with experience and nature, and the intelligible will of God, are again and again set before them, not solely by loading the memory with words and sentences, but by fixing their thoughts upon the subject-matter of their lessons, in short remarks and reflections suited to their comprehension, and growing out of the subjects of the catechetical or Scriptural passage, which they have been learning by heart, it is impossible that they can listen with indifference. They cannot fail of seeing the practical tendency of the knowledge imparted to them,—of being moved,—of hoping or fearing for themselves,—and of looking out for substantial grounds, on which they may rest their confidence of acceptance with God.*

EXAMPLE OF THE SYSTEM PURSUED IN REFERENCE TO THE CATECHISM.

Keeping these considerations in view, and with the desire also of bringing the by-standers, as well as the children, to a recollection of the principal incidents connected

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* Bishop Wilson recommends an earnest "inculcation of the fear of God," as the shortest and most effectual method of creating in young people a tenderness of conscience, and a desire to be thoroughly instructed in the doctrines of our Holy Faith. Rejecting the use of "arguments purely moral," such as "virtue is its own reward," he says, "we should utterly despair of giving them a full sight and knowledge of their duty, if God had not himself directed us to this consideration." "But will not this method of dealing with children

with the promulgation of the Christian covenant, I have endeavored to vary the examination: and to put intermediate questions between the several questions and answers of the Catechism, in the following manner, suggesting the replies, when not given by the children, in the language of Scripture, whenever it could be done appropriately.

Where were the servants of God first called Christians?

"The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."—*Acts* xi. 25.

Do you remember any other passage in the book of Acts, which shows that this name was commonly applied to them?

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."—*Acts* xxvi. 28.

Is there any promise, or prophecy in Scripture, that the people of the Lord should have a new name given to them?

"The Lord shall call his servants by another name."—*Isaiah* lxv.

What is required to be a child of God, now that you are old enough to understand the promises made for you in your baptism?

Faith in Jesus Christ. "Ye are all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ."—*Gal.* iii. 26.

How can you convince others, that you have faith, that you believe truly in God and Jesus Christ?

By keeping his commandments.

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make them melancholy? By no means: it may make them serious, and that they ought to be; and they ought to be so by times, lest they never be so as long as they live. That which makes people melancholy is, when they have wrong apprehensions of God, as if he had *ordained* them for misery, or when they are shown the danger they are in, without being shown the *way* of escape."—*See same Sermon, May*, 1724.

How can you keep the commandments?

By God's help.

By what means do you hope to obtain God's help?

By praying unto God to give me his grace, that I may continue in the same way unto my life's end.

Where were the commandments first delivered?

To Moses, on Mount Sinai.—*Exodus* xix.

Did any thing happen upon that occasion, to show how much God is to be feared when he delivers his commandments?

"There were thunders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount,—and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled."—*Exodus* xix. 16.

When does a young person begin to commit wilful and actual sin?

When he ceases to love God, or to fear God, or to think of God.

When Joseph was tempted to do wrong, what did he say?

"How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God."—*Gen.* xxxix. 9.

The Commandments and the Law came by Moses—what came by Jesus Christ?

"Grace and truth."—*John* i. 17.

But did Christ dispense with the Commandments?

No: Christ said, "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it."—*Matt.* v. 17.

AN EXAMPLE IN REFERENCE TO A SCRIPTURAL EXAMINATION.

In conducting the Sunday examination arising out of the Gospel, or Second Lesson of the day, I have endeavoured to make it attractive, as well as instructive, by a method which I will exemplify, by means of the Gospel for the third Sunday after Epiphany. One of the objects of interrogation being to ascertain, whether children give their attention to what they learn by heart, it is better to draw the Lesson out of their mouths, by leading questions, than by requiring a recital by rote.

Matthew viii. 1—13.

1. "When Jesus was come down from the mountain," what happened?

"Great multitudes followed him."

From whence?

"From Galilee, from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan."—*Matt.* iv. 25.

2. Who "came and worshipped him," and what was said?

"A leper, saying, Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean."

Do you remember any case of a person being smitten with leprosy for his offences?

Gehazi, the servant of Elisha.—2 *Kings* v. 27.

What was his sin?

Falsehood and covetousness. [Remarks upon these two vices naturally follow.]

3. Did Jesus cure the leper?

Yes. "Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean; and *immediately* his leprosy was cleansed."

When Naaman's leprosy was cured by Elisha the prophet, was it done thus immediately, and by a word?

No. Naaman was directed to wash in Jordan seven times.—2 *Kings* v.

[Remarks upon the superiority of Christ over the prophets, &c.]

4. What did Christ command the leper to do, after he had cured him?

"See thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them."

What did the priests do, according to the Mosaic law, when a leper was to be cleansed?

"The priest commanded two birds to be cleansed alive, —one to be killed, and the other to be dipped in the blood of the bird that was killed, and then let loose in the open field."—*Levit.* xiv. 1—7.

Did this ceremony represent any thing in which Christians should believe?

It represented or signified the shedding of Christ's blood for sinners, by which they are cleansed from their sin.*

5. When Jesus entered into Capernaum, who came to him?

6. "A Centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented."

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* At a Catechetical Examination in my parish Church in Durham, a boy of about 14 years of age came so well prepared, that he answered these two last questions in nearly the same words that I have here used.

What three virtues did this Centurion show, in coming in this manner to Jesus?

Faith, in that he believed in Christ's divine mission,—Hope, in that he trusted in Christ's mercy,—Charity, in that he left his home on a work of kindness and love, not for his own, but for his servant's sake.

Do you remember any other example of a good and pious Centurion?

"Cornelius, a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."—*Acts* x. 2.

7. Was Jesus inclined to grant the Centurion's request?

"Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him."

8. Did he go?

"The Centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

9. "For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, do this, and he doeth it."

What stranger, a great and honourable man, went like this Centurion to a prophet, to ask for a miracle, but with less humility?

Naaman, who was wroth when his request was not immediately granted, and turned and went away in a rage.—2 *Kings* v. 3, 4.

10. When Jesus heard the Centurion, what did he say?

"He marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

If the Centurion was not an Israelite, what do you suppose him to have been?

A Roman,—and a "proselyte,"—that is, one believing in the true God, but not conforming to the whole of the Mosaic law.

How did the Centurion's answer show his great faith?

He did not require Christ's presence at his house. "Speak *the word* only, and my servant shall be healed." For I am a man under authority; at my bidding I am obeyed. How much more shalt thou be obeyed by thy ministering spirits. If thou shalt but express thy will, it will be accomplished. In what manner did Christ signify, that strangers and Gentiles should be admitted into the covenant of God?

11. "And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east, and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."

Do you remember upon what occasion this truth was again announced to an Apostle, in reference to another Gentile?

When Peter was commanded in a vision to baptize Cornelius.—*Acts* x.

How did Christ signify that outward profession and privileges will not avail, unless the terms of the covenant be obeyed?

12. "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out, into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

You call yourself a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven; for what must you pray, that you may not be cast into this darkness, where there will be such anguish and tribulation?

"A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness."

How will your conduct testify that you have this grace?

By repentance for my past sins, and by forsaking sin in future, and by believing stedfastly the promises of God, made to me, in the Sacrament of Baptism.*

How did Jesus proclaim his divine power and mercy, in reference to the Centurion?

13. "And Jesus said, Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self same hour."

Do you see any proofs of the Godhead of Christ, and of the doctrine of the Trinity in this miracle?

Christ knew what was passing in the Centurion's heart, "*as thou believest;*" he knew his wish and his faith; he knew that he had perfect and stedfast faith. This was a proof of his Omniscience.

He healed with a *word*—"So be it done unto thee." As at the first creation, God said, "Let there be light, and there was light;" so, "He commanded, and it was done." This was a proof of Christ's Omnipotence.

"The servant was healed in the self same hour." This was a proof of Christ's ubiquity. His spirit was searching the Centurion's soul, and restoring the servant at a distance to health, at the same time.

What similar proof was given of Christ's Divinity, as related in another place by St. Matthew?

When he cured the daughter of the woman of Canaan. "Be it unto thee as thou wilt: and her daughter was made whole from that very hour."—*Matt.* xv. 28.

It is by such a method as this, by relieving the subject, and carrying on the exercise with as much spirit and cheer-

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*Upon all occasions it is my endeavour to lead the mind of the catechumen to compare the Catechism with Scripture.

fulness as possible, by putting questions out of the common course; by making one question lead to another; by sounding the child's state of mind, or depth of understanding; by putting searching interrogatories; by drawing attention to incidents and examples of Scripture that bear contrasting with some case before you; by permitting the catechumen to proceed with his simple, and if it should be so, with his erroneous answer, that out of error you may illustrate truth; by asking for the child's reasons, whether he makes a right or wrong reply; by persuading him to speak out, and declare himself; by directing the examination judiciously to some point of doctrine, upon which it is apprehended there may be some misconstruction in the minds of any of the parishioners, who happen to be present; and by interspersing such remarks, admonitions, and illustrations, as the occasion may suggest or require;—it is thus, that powerful effects are produced.

Catechising conducted upon this principle is not a matter of parade or form, it is something infinitely more; it is performed with the certainty that we are exercising, developing, and directing the spiritual energies of the young; while we are rousing their elders to recollection, and provoking them to emulation.

Another extremely beneficial modification of the ordinance, is to put questions upon the leading articles of religion, and to require answers in the literal words of Scripture. Very little practice, and a few scholars well taught will soon put the mode in train. Nothing can be more salutary, more instructive, and I may add, more deeply interesting to by-standers, than to witness an exercise of this description; to see the young Christian led up to the very fountain-head, to the well-spring of truth; and to find

that every word which proceeds from, or is put into his mouth, in illustration of the doctrines of his Church, is derived from Revelation. It cannot fail of exciting a spirit of enquiry, and in some instances of producing entire conviction. "The Catechist claims a right to be heard as soon as he begins, and carries with him every unprejudiced suffrage as he advances."*

THE MODE OF INTERROGATORY ON THE PRINCIPAL ARTICLES OF RELIGION, AND GIVING ANSWERS FROM SCRIPTURE.

GOD.

How did God make himself known?

"He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel."—*Psalm* ciii. 7.

Could God be known without Revelation?

"The world by wisdom knew not God."—1 *Cor.* i. 21.

What is God?

"God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."—*John* iv. 24.

Where is God?

"Do I not fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord."—*Jer.* xxiii. 24.

Does God see all that we do?

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* See the Bible Catechism, by W. F. Lloyd. A cheap and unpretending little volume, but well worthy of attention, which will greatly assist any Catechist who may feel inclined to adopt the system here recommended.

"Thou God seest me."—*Gen.* xvi. 13.

Is God inclined to forgive our sins?

"Thou art a God ready to pardon,—slow to anger."—*Nehem.* ix. 17.

Must we always obey God in all cases?

"We ought to obey God rather than men."—*Acts* v. 29.

By what name did God announce himself?

"I am that I am."—*Exod.* iii. 14.

By what attributes does St. Paul designate God?

"The King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only wise God?—1 *Tim.* i. 17.

JESUS CHRIST.

Why was the Messiah called Jesus?

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."—*Matt.* i. 21.

Why was he called Emmanuel?

"They shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us."—*Matt.* i. 23.

What was Christ called in prophecy?

"His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." *Isaiah* ix.

What did Christ call himself?

"Because I said, I am the Son of God.—*John* x. 36.

What did the Apostles say of Christ?

"And the *Word* was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory,—the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of light and truth."—*John* i. 14.

"He is the propitiation for our sins."—1 *John* ii. 2.

"The Shepherd and Bishop of our souls."—1 *Pet.* ii. 25.

"He is the Mediator of a better covenant."—*Heb.* viii. 6.

"He ever liveth to make intercession for them."—*Heb.* vii. 25.

HOLY GHOST.

What promise did Christ give concerning the Holy Ghost?

"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter; that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth.—*John* xiv. 16, 17.

"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name."—*John* xxvi.

Will the Holy Ghost be given to those who pray for him?

"If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Ghost to them that ask him."—*Luke* xi. 13.

For what purpose is the Holy Ghost given?

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities.—*Rom.* viii. 26.

In what manner are the operations of the Holy Ghost described in Scripture?

"The Holy Ghost *said*, separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them."—*Acts* xiii. 2.

"They *were forbidden* by the Holy Ghost to preach in Asia."—*Acts* xvi. 6.

"The Holy Ghost *witnesseth* in every city."—*Acts* xx. 23.

"Take heed unto the flock, over which the Holy Ghost *hath made you* overseers."—*Acts* xx. 28.

THE GODHEAD OF CHRIST.

What does St. John say of Christ's Divinity?

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."—*John* i. 1.

What does St. Paul say?

"God was manifest in the flesh.—1 *Tim.* iii. 16.

Prove the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, by showing that *eternity* is ascribed to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

"The mystery made manifest according to the commandment of the *everlasting* God."—*Rom.* xvi. 25, 26.

"I (*Jesus*) am the *first* and the *last*.—*Rev.* xxii. 13.

"Through the *everlasting Spirit*."—*Heb.* ix. 14.

Prove it by the application of the term Holy One.

"I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator."—*Isaiah* xliii. 15.

"But ye denied the Holy One, and desired a murderer to be released unto you.—*Acts* iii. 14.

"Ye have an unction from the Holy One."—1 *John* ii. 20.

MISCELLANEOUS DOCTRINES EXPLAINED IN ANSWERS FROM SCRIPTURE.

What is original sin?

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."—*Rom.* v. 12.

What sacrifice or ransom has been offered for sin?

"Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." —*Heb.* ix. 26.

What is the atonement of Christ?

"The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all."—*Isaiah* lv. 6.

"He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." 2 *Cor.* v. 19.

What is the efficacy of prayer?

"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he shall give it you."—*John* xvi. 23.

Why are we to keep the sabbath holy?

"Hallow my sabbaths, they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." —*Ezekiel* xx. 20.

Why is the new birth necessary?

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Ye must be born again."—*John* iii. 3. 7.

What is the promise that the prayers of the young shall be heard?

"Those that seek me early shall find me."—*Proverbs* viii. 17.

What examples have we of early piety?

"The child Samuel ministered unto the Lord." And "Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him."—1 *Samuel* iii. 1. 8.

"In the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, Josiah began to seek after the God of David his father."—2 *Chr.* xxxiv. 3.

"From a child thou (Timothy) hast known the Holy Scriptures."—2 *Tim.* iii. 15.

Are disposition and true character manifested at an early age?

"Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right."—*Prov.* xx. 11.

There are not many Catechumens who could readily furnish answers to half these questions, but an important advantage is gained by proposing them, inasmuch as the instructor has the opportunity of directing attention to the passages referred to, and of proving that the basis of his doctrines is founded on the rock of truth.

EXPLANATIONS OF WORDS AND PHRASES.

A third branch of the interrogatory system, equally salutary, is to ask for explanations and definitions of the phrases and terms which occur in the Catechism, or which are in common use in the Church. Such as Baptism, Sacrament, Vow, Salvation, Catholic Church, Communion of Saints, Forgiveness, Resurrection, Redeemed, Sanctified, Elect people, Idol, Sabbath day, Covet, Neighbour, Spiritual, Ghostly enemy, Kingdom of God, New birth, Righteousness, Death unto Sin, Grace, Repentance, Sacrifice, New life, &c. &c.

I do not recommend that these definitions should be required only as opportunities arise in the course of the examination, but that half an hour should be occasionally devoted to the express purpose of explaining the Christian vocabulary. Any thing which varies the service, and produces rapid transition, from one idea to another, quickens attention, and is therefore usefully reduced to practice, where one of the first objects is to engage willing attention.

THE PROGRESS OF CHILDREN, WHO HAVE BEEN CATECHISED, EXEMPLIFIED BY QUESTIONS PROPOSED, AND ANSWERS LITERALLY RETURNED BY THEM.

Before I conclude this part of my subject, I wish to furnish your Lordship with a more distinct view of the real progress made by children under the system which has been adopted; and for this purpose, I will beg your attention to the ensuing questions and answers, which formed a leading feature of the examination on the Sunday before Easter, in the present year. The children drawn up in the chancel were of all ages from six to fifteen. Some of them had been in the Sunday School from its commencement, and had been trained weekly by myself, or by the assistant minister, Mr. Judkin, with the aid of Mr. Roberts, the indefatigable superintendent master, and twelve or fifteen of the most respectable of the congregation of Somer's Town new Church, who volunteer their services every Sabbath before Morning Prayers. The Catechumens were not in any respect prepared for the particular queries which were proposed to them, but as it was my wish on this occasion to obtain satisfactory answers, I must plainly acknowledge, that I addressed myself to those, who were most likely to give them. The replies were taken down at the time by a person whom I had previously requested to undertake this office, and they are now transcribed from his paper.

Why is Passion Week so called?

Because Christ suffered and died in that week.

What were Christ's sufferings, which gave name to this week?

His agony in the garden of Gethsemane, and death upon the Cross.

What does God require in those, who hope to benefit by Christ's sufferings?

Faith in his word.
Repentance of past sins.
Obedience to his precepts.

What are the means of Grace?

God's word.
Prayer.
The Sacrament.

In whose name are we to pray?

In Christ's. He told his disciples, Ask in my name.

In what part of our Liturgy do you find this set forth?

At the end of all the prayers, "Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

What do you learn from the sufferings and death of Christ?

Not answered.

Why are you afraid of God's displeasure, more than man's?

"Because he can destroy both body and soul in hell."

Do you remember any cases of God depriving men of life for their sins?

The destruction of all but Noah's family at the flood.
Korah's company, Dathan and Abiram.
Ananias and Sapphira.

Can you state the names of any transgressors recorded in Scripture, whose *souls*, you have reason to believe, have perished?

Dives mentioned in the parable.
Judas Iscariot.

Can you tell me of any sinners mentioned in Scripture, who repented, and of whom it is believed that they are receiving the benefit of Christ's sacrifice?

The penitent thief.
St. Paul, who once persecuted Christians.

What must you do, when you are conscious of having offended God?

I must pray for forgiveness, and repent, and mend my life.

Can you do this of yourself?

Not without the help of God's Spirit, the Holy Ghost.

How has Christ described the joys of heaven and the punishment of hell?

Not answered.

Summing up the Gospel history, what three great things did Jesus do for mankind?

Not answered.

How was Jesus received by the Jews?

Answer if you can in the words of Scripture.

"He was despised and rejected of men."

How did he endure his insults and sufferings? Again answer from Scripture.

"When he was reviled, he reviled not again: when he suffered he threatened not."

When Christ drew near the time of his death, and his agony increased, what did he do?

Not answered.

What did his disciples do, when he was taken before Pilate?

Forsook him and fled.

What did Pilate say of him?

I find no fault in him.

How did Christ pray for his enemies?

Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.

What was Christ's last prayer?

"Father into thy hands I commend my spirit."

After such evidence that the mental powers of children are called into action, and improved by this system, and that they soon become anxious to prepare themselves by previous study and application for the weekly scrutiny, it will reasonably be asked, what proof have you, that they are the better in their general conduct, and that the truths which they are learning, make an impression upon their hearts? I have many proofs to give, but I shall reserve them until I discuss the utility of the plan, under its own head.

The modifications proposed by your Lordship having been thus reduced to practice, it now becomes my very agreeable business to show, that the success secured by them has amply justified your Lordship's prediction, and my own expectations.

"Catechising may be rendered POPULAR as well as USEFUL, and herein an evidence peculiarly interesting, and not unimportant to the congregation.—It will give to the Clergy, in populous places, an OPPORTUNITY OF BECOMING KNOWN TO THE RISING GENERATION, in the character of persons invested by lawful authority with the charge of their spiritual interests, and having a right to their attention and obedience. It will act as a STIMULUS TO DOMES-

TIC INSTRUCTION, and prove one of the strongest incitements to the parents to teach, and to the children to learn."*

Such were your Lordship's anticipations, and I will notice the accomplishment of them in order.

POPULARITY OF CATECHISING.

There are very few human productions, upon which a Christian teacher can ground his instructions, with so much confidence as the Church Catechism. The Roman Catholic Catechisms run away into many points of faith and discipline, which have no support whatever from the plain word of Scripture. Several of the best Catechisms of reformed congregations are abstrusely doctrinal,—others are diffuse, and lengthened out into treatises; while our own is neither redundant nor dogmatical. It never wanders from Scripture, or runs into nice distinctions: it contains that alone in which all Christians are agreed. It raises no scruples,—it offends no prejudices, and its very brevity implies, that it leaves much to the judgment of the parish priest, and demands, that he does more than confine himself to its concise phraseology; that, taking its letter as his guide, he makes a full and complete illustration of its Apostolical lessons.

Hence the Clergyman, who commences his catechetical lectures with this manual in his hand, sets out in good humour with all Christian men: every body is with him,—no man is against him. Those, who think the Catechism

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* Charge of 1818, p. 27, 28. also 1822, p. 25, 3d edition.

too short, look to him for amplification: those, who fancy it requires some explanation, are glad to have him for an expounder.

His next advantage consists in the necessity, under which he lies, of adapting his style of instruction to the level of every age and capacity. He is not catechising, when he ceases to be perfectly intelligible, easy, and familiar. The advice which has been so judiciously given to the PREACHER, applies with tenfold force to the CATECHIST. "He must descend from the high and lofty tone of language, to walk in the humble terms of Scripture. He must limit his rounded periods, to the extent of vulgar comprehension. He must abound in interrogations and addresses, which the rules of composition condemn, in writing, though the rules of nature sanction them in speaking."*

For the lower orders especially, the system has "charms in its very homeliness;" and it is the more attractive, because it allows of many topics being intermixed, which a Clergyman would be unwilling to discuss from the pulpit, but which he may beneficially, and without any compromise of the gravity of his office, introduce from the Catechetical chair. "Whereas in sermons there is a kind of state, in catechising there is an humbleness very suitable to Christian regeneration."†

By-standers, of all degrees and attainments, take an interest in observing how the scroll of human nature is unfolded by this exercise, and how easily it is read on such occasions; they are pleased in seeing the effects which religious doctrine have upon youthful minds and spirits,—in

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* See Sumner's Apostolical Preaching, p. 11, ed. 5.

† Herbert's Country Parson.

listening to replies, which display the different dispositions and abilities of children;—in witnessing the development of character and genius,—and in comparing their own religious advancement and acquirements with those of the juvenile circle before them. Many of my congregation have made no secret of confessing, that they could not answer questions proposed, as well as the children have done, and that they have been thankful for the opportunity of picking up information, without the shame or the trouble of asking for it. They have made a still more important acknowledgment,—viz. that they have taken hints and rebukes kindly, which were aimed at them through younger marks, when a direct reproof would have been intolerable. "Admonitions directed to the young find their way, obliquely indeed, but often effectually, to the bosoms of the old."*

A parish priest, who resides among his people, and who is acquainted with their spiritual state, may indeed, with perfect fearlessness, take advantage of a Catechetical examination, to hazard remarks which would be thought indicative of a jealous and controversial spirit towards persons of a different persuasion, or personally offensive towards individuals, were they spoken solemnly and with premeditation from the pulpit. It is the informal, the extemporaneous, the natural character of the address; it is the observation growing out of circumstances, and out of the unexpected turn, which is sometimes given to the discourse; it is the word forced from the mouth, while the heart is full; it is the genuine feeling, and honest opinion of the Pastor, which will have utterance, when all his concern

* Archdeacon Bayley.

is awakened in behalf of his young flock; it is the tongue that speaks, when the fire of truth is kindled; it is this, which makes indulgent and attentive hearers, and renders all that is said welcome and impressive.

For these reasons, the Catechist may make his instructions local, and adapt them to the particular state of thought, knowledge, opinion, errors or morals, which prevail in his neighbourhood, and yet give no disgust, because personality cannot be imputed when children are the parties immediately addressed.*

But even supposing the parochial minister's voice may

* Is there not reason to believe, that the doctrines of the Reformation would find their way more generally to the hearts and understandings of the people in Ireland, if the Clergy of the Established Church would practise Catechising upon a more extended scale? In India many prejudices have been removed by this means; and where the natives will not listen to a Sermon, or to a controversial discussion, professedly directed against their superstitions, they will gather round children, who are being examined in Scriptural exercises, and take pleasure in hearing their explanations.

The following is an extract from the Report of a Missionary:—

"A relation of the Rajah of Tanjore, who sends his son to our school for instruction, sent me word, that if I would examine the school at his house, he should feel obliged, and would be present at the examination. I wished him to allow me to occupy his verandah instead of the house, which he got in readiness for the examination. *When I was examining the children, a crowd, and among them some very respectable heathens, came to the place to be present;* but, as I had anticipated, his servants were posted to keep the people at such a distance, that but very few could hear me; on my observing to him, that the Word of God should be made known to every one who has a desire for it, he ordered his servants to let the people come near the verandah. I had now an advantage, by having more hearers than usual."

sound harshly in some ears, or touch chords that vibrate unpleasantly in some hearts, yet all will admit, that he has a right to address himself, as a reprover, a counsellor, or an expounder of doctrine, to the children of his own flock, and that it is nothing more than just deference to the parental authority in which he stands invested, to bear with him, as with a person privileged to use plainness, or sharpness.

It is not for me to say how many of the causes here recited have had their operation in the scene of my own labours; but I may affirm, without any fear of contradiction, that since Catechising has been regularly pursued in Somer's Town, there has been no other sentiment expressed, than that of satisfaction and approbation. Many come to Church regularly, who were not regular before; some come who never entered Church doors before. The interest taken in the practice is so great, that no small inconvenience arises from the numbers, who crowd up to the place of examination, exhibiting an eagerness to catch every word; and it is difficult to find space enough, near the chancel, to accommodate such as are anxious to see, as well as to hear, all that is going on.

The most respectable inhabitants of the parish are in the habit of bringing their children, and some of them have warmly expressed their thankfulness for the example, as well as for the instruction, which they find so profitable to the younger members of their families. Parents, and relatives of the children examined, take, as it may be expected, more than ordinary pleasure in the service, and tears of joy are often seen gushing from their eyes, when the objects of their more immediate concern are rewarded, or commended for the manner in which they may have acquitted themselves.

But perhaps nothing has contributed to prove the efficacy and popularity of the system more strongly, than the inducement it is found to hold out to young persons, beyond the usual age of scholars, to present themselves Sunday after Sunday for the acquirement of further knowledge, or for the purpose of instructing others. I shall have to speak elsewhere of such as come with the praiseworthy motive of offering their services as teachers; it is enough to state here in a few words, that there are many apprentices and servants of both sexes, who take their places regularly amidst the children, and show an anxiety to be questioned with the rest. In fact, the catechumens of all ages take so lively a concern in the endeavours that are made to improve them, and to inculcate salutary religious sentiments, that they are not only voluntary, but cheerful attendants. The time occupied is usually less than an hour, but when it is exceeded, there are few symptoms of impatience, and many indications that these exercises, and the preparation for them, are considered as among the happier hours of their life.

How can I doubt that even the youngest of my charge find entertainment as well as improvement, when I perceive that as the interrogations advance, their eyes lighten up, their imaginations outrun their power of utterance, their anxiety to reply gets the better of bashfulness, and their mental activity increases, as long as I continue to propose questions, which exercise thought or ingenuity? In fact, they are pleased to find themselves taking part in a conversational exercise, and delighted at every fresh discovery of the secret, that their own minds are capable of effort, and that they themselves can explain as well as repeat.

When a religious service finds so many persons of all ages and conditions, who are willingly disposed to wait upon it,—it cannot but lead to some results which are of the highest importance to the Christian cause.

A strong regard, and a strong reciprocity of confidence grow out of the *Clergyman's* attempt to train up his young flock in the way they should go, and out of the disposition evinced by the *congregation*, to stimulate the assiduity of the children by their presence.—He has our best interests at heart, he labours to build us up in our holy faith, to lead our thoughts, and to fix our attention on that which is necessary to salvation. He is not satisfied with our formal and verbal acquiescence, he requires a sincere and a conscientious assent. He takes a parental interest in our children, and as though he were Parent, Sponsor, and Priest, he provides in all things for their 'souls' health.' He acts towards them as though he had the Scriptural portrait of the good shepherd ever before his eyes. He gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom. He brings back that which was driven away. He seeks that which was lost.—Such are the reflections of the parishioners in regard to their Pastor. The Parish Priest entertains corresponding sentiments. He loves his flock the more affectionately, because they follow him, and know his voice, because they will not follow a stranger. They are the more and more endeared to him, in that they place themselves under his guidance, and consent to be directed by his hand. It is the willingness of parents, children, masters of families and of their dependents, to be taught of him, and to give themselves up to his super-

visal, which animates his affection, and cements the union.*

But these are general reflections. I am bound to show, not what the state of things is likely to be, but what it is, as actually resulting from the system under my own management.

Here then, in a district, situated between a dense population on one side, where there are numberless evil seductions: and the outskirts of London on the other, where young people are tempted to spend the Sabbath in profaneness, or in idle roaming about the fields: here, between two and three hundred children are not only persuaded to come to Church, but to devote the hours immediately before and after public worship to religious acqirements. And not only so, but many of their relatives and friends, moved by their example, or anxious or curious to know the extent of their proficiency, are induced to follow them to the same place of instruction, and to pass, in seriousness, time which might otherwise be consumed in levity or sin. So much of the Sabbath being spent becomingly, it is reasonable to hope, that the remainder of it will not be mis-spent, and that a great number of responsible beings are put in the way, by this simple ordinance, of cultivating a spirit of true devotion, and of reflecting at home on what they have been learning in the house of God.

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* Should it become more general in the Parochial Clergy to devote a portion of their time to the public instruction of children in Church, might we not hope, that sponsors also would begin to entertain more serious notions of the responsibility of their office? "Ye shall call upon them to hear sermons," is one of the baptismal exhortations. The short and practical discourses, which find their way into catechetical examinations, are "sermons" which it would do well for sponsors to invite their adopted children to attend.

Have we not cause to expect a blessing upon such labours, when a blessing has been promised?

After all, says Secker, the most valuable instruction* for servants, for children, and for all *persons*, is the *public one of the Church*, which our Saviour himself hath promised to *bless with his presence*.

"Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, that they may hear, and that they may learn and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of his law, and that their children which have not known any thing, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God."†

Several adults, who had not been previously admitted into the Church, have, at their own request, received the Sacrament of Baptism, in consequence of the impression made upon their minds, by remarks which they have heard,

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* Wherever the system is adopted, that is where instruction is conveyed, not merely by teaching the catechisms, but by *catechising*, the blessing of God appears to crown the undertaking. The annexed account is extracted from the last Report of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, p. 39.

"From *Barbados* the Society learns that there is a progressive desire on the part of the slave to receive, and of the higher classes to impart the blessings of religion. The Catechetical system explained in the last Annual Report, has advanced materially during the year which has just closed; and Sunday Schools have been opened in many places. It appears that by the united exertions of the clergy and their catechists, with the personal co-operation of the proprietors, their families, and overseers, by far the greater number of estates in this island are receiving the benefits of religious instruction; and one good effect already perceived has been an increased attendance of the Negroes at Church, where they behave with exemplary decorum."

† Deut. xxxi. 12, 13.

after questions on the nature of baptismal vows and promises, and the efficacy of the baptismal covenant.

Many young persons of both sexes, and of different conditions in life, have kindly proffered their aid, and have requested permission to act as Teachers, and to prepare the children for their catechetical examination. They not only attend at an early hour on Sunday mornings, but they have signified their readiness to give lessons, during the summer months, from six till half-past seven on Sunday evenings. Not to dwell upon the advantage, which the children themselves derive from the superintendence of steady instructors, who are fully aware of the obligations of the Christian Covenant, whose age and respectability give weight to their admonitions, and who exercise an authority over the minds of boys and girls, which monitors chosen from among themselves could not be expected to attain; it is a most important point gained, to have such coadjutors enlisted in our cause, and to unite them closer and closer to our Church, by bringing them into frequent converse with us.

The relation does not end here; the intercourse which begins so kindly is improved, and in all his pastoral functions the parish priest may look to have his hands strengthened, his plans seconded, and his influence extended, by the zeal and affectionate partizanship of these his lay friends and assistants, who are first united with him as fellow-labourers in the work of religious education.

With regard to the children themselves, out of several cases, to which my inquiries and observations have been directed, the following will not be thought unworthy of selection:—A boy of fourteen years of age, after having attended the catechising for some months, was bound appren-

tice, or placed in the service of a tradesman in the Borough. His master employs him on Sunday mornings, but permits him to call his time his own after noonday. The lad regularly finds his way to the Church in Somer's Town, makes his appearance at afternoon Prayers and Sermon, and takes his place in the chancel for examination, among his former companions. None answer better than himself; he evidently devotes many of his leisure hours to religious study, and has made himself master of a Bible and Prayer Book, partly by producing tickets of merit, and partly by purchase money. He is altogether, from disposition, good conduct, and application, a youth of considerable promise.

The annexed letter from another lad of fourteen years and a half, who has also left the Parish, but is occasionally seen among our children, will tell his history and state of mind better than any words I can adopt. It is addressed to the master of the Sunday School.

"Sir,

"I hardly know how to express my gratitude enough for the kindness and learning which I received while at your Sunday School, but I am obliged to discontinue attending, as I have got a situation at Mr. ————, Westminster, who is a very religious good man, and with him I am very comfortable and happy. I should feel obliged to you, if you would give my best thanks to Mr. Judkin,* for the learning I have received from him, which I hope will never die in my memory. I have paid one shilling to a large Bible, and will send all as soon as possible; if you will have the goodness to send me one, when I have paid

* Assistant minister of Somer's Town.

enough to purchase one. I think you have also some tickets of mine, if you please to send me a little book for them, you would oblige, dear Sir,

Your ever grateful servant,

R. B."

These two boys have displayed the same uniform attention and good conduct, during the whole of their connexion with us. The subjoined cases are of a different description.

Samuel ————, long after his admission into the Sunday School, was so untractable and perverse, that his teachers began to despair of his reformation. It was even proposed to expel him. But indications of improvement were gradually exhibited, and he is now pronounced to be among the most attentive and best behaved of his class.

Another lad, whose name it is not necessary to mention, was for many weeks in the habit of mixing unwillingly among the children at their Sunday examinations. His master insisted upon it, under the hope of seeing an obstinate and disobedient temper improved. The boy has derived so much benefit by his attendance, that his master is trying the same experiment with a second youth in his service.

A girl, whose ready answers and good conduct lately attracted my notice, was represented to me, as having been so giddy and ill-behaved, when she first came among us, that it would have been pronounced "enthusiasm" to have looked for any effectual change. She is now in the highest class, and after receiving several rewards, has saved money enough to purchase one of our best bibles.

Added to these and many other examples of the same

nature, there are several very young children, whose emulation has been so strongly excited, that I have been obliged to check it, lest their application during the week should prove injurious to their health. One of these, not seven years of age, came prepared, upon a late occasion, to repeat the whole of the eighth chapter of St. John,—fifty-nine verses,—the self-imposed exercise of the past week. Every Sunday, a hundred voices exclaim, "I have learnt the Collect—and I the Gospel,—and I a page of Lewis's Exposition of the Catechism."

The system thus affords the Clergyman an opportunity of becoming known to the rising generation, and extending his influence among them. This is one of the most substantial advantages obtained by catechising. It follows as a certain consequence. Kindness always finds its way to the hearts of young persons, and more particularly when it proceeds from those, whom they are in the habit of regarding as persons vested with authority. From the very constitution of our Church Establishment, and from other causes, which it is unnecessary to discuss, the youth of the lower orders seem to require more than ordinary invitation to approach us. Catechising, well conducted, breaks down this partition wall; the child's bosom opens to the minister, who frequently accosts him in a voice of affectionate concern, and manifests an interest in his behalf. Seeing that there is some feeling for him, he loves and reverences the man, for whom he before entertained nothing more than cold respect. The parents also are bound by cords of love to the priest, who takes more than formal and official notice of their children,—who holds his station among them, not merely as a national functionary, rendering back a measured return of duty for the revenue he draws,—but whose

intercourse is an intercourse of zeal, and friendship, and affection, exercised equally towards old and young. In more instances that one, I have found a whole family moved by means of a child, who has been desired to repeat at home what he has learnt at Church, and to read a particular passage to his father or mother, or to warn a brother or a sister, who has not yet been restrained by the fear of God.

The catechumens themselves, conscious that the Clergyman has his eye upon them, measure their conduct accordingly, and are oftentimes restrained in an hour of temptation, by the apprehension, that a knowledge of their transgression would expose them to his reproof, and to the charge of inconsistency. It is frequently enough to say to them, What, will you, who have answered so well at the examination in Church, and received the commendations of your minister, will you now act in direct violation of the precepts, which you then professed to observe? Will you, who have had a kind counsellor and friend in your parish priest, turn your back upon him, and go to unauthorized persons for spiritual direction, when you have had so many proofs that he is much more deeply concerned in your spiritual integrity and safety, than any stranger can be?

It is not, however, my wish to go into any great length upon these topics, important as they are. I have merely proposed to give a sketch, in outline, of the superstructure which a good master builder may erect upon catechising: it will therefore be enough to add, on this head, that one great desideratum in our ecclesiastical system, may be supplied by it.

For the most part we lose sight of our flock at a very

dangerous period of life,—after they leave the Parochial Schools. Except during the short seasons, few and far between, which are devoted to the preparation for Confirmation, young persons, from fifteen to twenty years of age, are seldom brought into contact with their Clergyman.* The Catechist makes opportunities of intercourse, of famil-

[* "Nor can I leave this branch of the subject, without, at least, a slight allusion to that which, in my judgment, is by far the most interesting duty of the pastoral office, *the nurture and the instruction of the young*. To no other exercise of his fidelity and patience, can the Christian minister so certainly look for future increase, or for present satisfaction. To the regular catechetical instruction, to the Sunday School, to the Bible Class, to whatever can bring the youth of his congregation about him, engage them in religious inquiries, and impress them with religious truth, let him assiduously devote himself. Let him begin early, and late leave off;—engaging the infant soldiers of the Cross, from the time that they first leave their mother's arms; and never letting them go, till, as grown up men and women, they are themselves fit to become teachers and examples to the flock. In both these respects,—in beginning too late, and leaving off too early,—the Church is greatly the sufferer. The baptismal font does not now duly lead, as it was wont, and ever should, first to the chancel rail, and then to the table of the Lord. Many that are baptised, never ask for confirmation. Many that are confirmed, come not to that holy supper. The Church loses her hold upon them; and they are but too often lost to her,—to themselves,—to the world,—to God. These things, surely, ought not so to be. That, so far as in us lies, they may not be so, let us follow his example, who, in that beautiful prophetic picture, 'feeds his flock like a shepherd, gathering the lambs with his arms, and carrying them in his bosom;'—let us ever bear in mind, his affectionate appeal to the Apostle Peter, and make it the test, by which, to our own hearts, we try our love for him,—'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me, more than these? Feed my lambs.'"—Bishop Doane, *Primary Charge*.]

iarizing himself with names and countenances and dispositions, which other ministers, especially in very large parishes, cannot hope to enjoy. He gives himself a right, which is willingly conceded to him, of enquiring after those, whom he has been in the habit of instructing every week, in their progress from tender to riper years. Should he hear, or see, or learn from others, that they are going astray, either in opinion or practice, he has an appeal to them, which they cannot easily resist. Whether he shall miss them at Church, or at the Sacrament, or whatever be his reason to suspect that they are departing from the way of truth, he has opened a door to their hearts and understandings, which no man can shut: which they themselves cannot close against him, and through which he may regain access whenever he pleases.

IT ACTS AS A STIMULUS TO DOMESTIC INSTRUCTION.

Of all excitements that have ever been devised, to encourage the parents to teach, and the children to learn, there is none like this. The publicity of the proceedings,—the solemnity of the place,—the presence and earnestness of the Pastor of the flock,—the honest pride which the parents take in having an opportunity of proving to their neighbours and acquaintances, that they have not neglected their children,—and the gratification of the children in receiving praise or rewards* in the face of all whom they

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* The Bishop of Salisbury was present at one of these examinations in Somer's Town Chapel, and being highly pleased with the

are accustomed to hold in respect; each of these is enough in itself to operate powerfully upon the mind during the week, and to spur on old and young to make preparation against the ensuing enquiry. What then may be expected to be the result when these motives act in combination, when they are constantly at work, when there is no intermission, but when every Sabbath makes new demands upon the same attention?*

I will confine myself to the mention of two facts in proof of the strong feeling, which prevails in families, to qualify the children for the catechetical examination in Church.

The mother of eleven children in Somer's Town, sends seven of them to Church to be catechised, and three of these are so well trained by her, that they are among the best of those who answer. They all come prepared with some portion of the Scripture, or expositions of the catechism, committed to memory during the week.

At a very early stage of our proceedings, a boy of about eleven years of age, was noticed for the extraordinary readiness of his answers, when he was asked for Scriptural

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answers of three or four children, he kindly gave them a piece of money each. These young folks were so excessively gratified by the notice of his Lordship, that they preserve his presents, and wear them as medals round their necks.

* A Letter from my parish in the country, where the system has been tried upon the same plan, gives the following pleasing account of its success.

"The new plan answers remarkably well, and I have had clear proof that it will operate as a stimulus, not only to the children themselves, but to those connected with them. I drew out several little confessions, that brother A., and sister B., and aunt D., had been hearing and questioning the young folks at home."—*See Letter from the same writer*, page 182.

references. It was explained to me, that his father, who had previously been inattentive to his religious duties, began to "search Scripture" with his child every evening, with the view of preparing him for the Sunday questions. That, which commenced with the mere desire of making his son a proficient in an exercise of memory, has ended in conviction, and the man is now a reformed character.

Such, my Lord, are the remarks which I have thrown together as concisely as possible, more in the form of fragments and hints, than of a regular disquisition, under the hope of inducing other Clergymen to give their serious consideration to the merits of an ordinance, which most men know how to appreciate in theory, while few are disposed to try its effect in its several practical bearings.* But since a plan adopted by myself may seem to require something more than my own testimony in evidence of its practicability and success, I beg attention to the annexed extract of a letter, addressed to me by a Lay friend, who witnessed the manner in which the business of catechising was carried on by my Curate, during my absence from Somer's Town, and the impression made upon the children and the congregation.

"I was last Sunday afternoon at Somer's Town chapel. Perceiving many of the congregation collecting round the Communion-table after the service, to hear the children of the district Schools catechised, I joined the throng. It was indeed a most gratifying scene. The children, to the number of one hundred and fifty, or sixty, evidently assembled willingly; they came not as by constraint to an ungrateful task. They seemed to feel that they were in the pre-

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[* Far too true!—*Am. Ed.*]

sence of their fathers and their mothers, their relations and their friends; they were cheered, too, by the interest which was manifested by many of their richer neighbours. The spectators, I was glad to observe, were numerous, and of all ranks and ages. Nothing could exceed the kindness of Mr. Judkin's manner. His questions related chiefly to the Lessons, the Collect, and the Epistle and Gospel for the day, parts of which many of the children had learned during the week. Their answers were frequently extremely pertinent and correct; and if they hesitated, they were encouraged to say what they did think and know, though they might err widely from the mark; and by thus learning the extent and nature of their ignorance, the Catechist was the better able to instruct them, κατηχειν τον λογον. The young Catechumens seemed to feel that something more was required of them than answers, with which their lips had been long familiar. When a question was proposed, it immediately arrested their attention; and if they perceived, or thought they perceived the answer, they strove to catch the eye of the examiner. The sacredness of the place prevented any unseemly bursts, but their emulation was not checked by unnecessary form.

"It is impossible to suppose that the by-standers did not profit by such an examination; the mere questions must have incited many to reflect; and the words of instruction and advice, which were offered from time to time by the Catechist, could not be lost. And surely he does not rightly conceive the duty of a Catechist, who thinks it satisfied by asking certain formal questions, and hearing the prescribed answers. The occasions which an examination must offer, are the most valuable for reproof and explanation of the doctrines of the Gospel.

"What a contrast between the animated scene I have faintly sketched, and the system set forth by the Canon! The service of the Church is interrupted; a dozen children are drawn up before the reading desk in prim array, and repeat the words of their Catechism. This mode is inconvenient and uninteresting, and is therefore seldom adopted. But what is the consequence? Catechetical instruction is almost disused in our Churches, though its observance is recommended by the most potent considerations."

THE SAME SYSTEM ADOPTED AT DURHAM.

The preceding pages give an account of an experiment made in the metropolis: your Lordship will have no objection to hear how the system may work in a country town, and in a parish where it might be thought, that the introduction of a new force was not so imperiously necessary.

In November last, I became the Incumbent of St. Margaret's, a parish in Durham. The population is about three thousand, and I found the way prepared for me by the labours of two eminent predecessors,* each of whom had distinguished the period of his cure by some beneficial improvement in the parish. The Clergyman, whom I immediately succeeded, had put into efficient training a Sunday-school, and an Infant-school, and had secured such an ample provision of Bibles, Testaments, and Prayer-books, that there is scarcely a family which cannot pro-

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* The Dean of Chester, and the Rev. W. N. Darnell.

duce a proof of his zeal, in their possession of a copy of the Scriptures. The path thus smoothed, had been further improved by the constant residence of a curate,* who has been, during sixteen years, THE PARISH PRIEST, in every sense of that term, full of meaning as it is. All possible means were open to me of putting myself in immediate communication with my new flock, through the introduction of one who knew them all, and was known of them. Therefore, if Somer's Town presented a fair spot for the experiment of catechising, on your Lordship's modified plan, in consequence of the difficulties, which a parochial Clergyman would have to encounter there, St. Margaret's might also be regarded as favourable ground, in consideration of its facilities.

Perceiving afternoon prayers to be indifferently attended, and the Sunday-school to furnish a muster very unequal to the numbers on the list, I determined to have recourse to catechising forthwith, and I looked with sanguine expectation to the result. The effect was even greater than that which I anticipated. The afternoon congregation increased every Sunday; and in ten weeks the number of children in attendance at school, which did not exceed 60 on the first day I officiated, had swelled to 146. It has now reached 160.

I derive no small satisfaction from having an opportunity of inserting the following Report, by Mr. George, of the improvement already resulting from steady perseverance in the practice. It is important to have the opinion of a Clergyman who has reflected so much and so seriously upon the nature of clerical duties, and to adduce such an

* The Rev. P. George.

accession as this to the valuable authorities which I have already cited in behalf of Public Catechising.

"In compliance with your request, I send you a hasty sketch of the plan of Catechising in the Church, first adopted when you became the Incumbent, and still continued; together with a statement of the effects it has produced.

"It seems proper, in the first place, to advert briefly to the nature and extent of our population; and also to certain measures which had previously been put into operation. The population of the Parish amounts to more than 3000; and is of a very indigent and fluctuating character. Being a detached suburb of a considerable town, and abounding in mean houses, which are, moreover, in a multitude of instances, divided into tenements occupied by distinct families;—it naturally becomes, for these reasons, the abode of the poorest orders; and, on some other accounts, also attracts very many of the vagrants, and loose and suspicious characters, who pass along the great North-road. These circumstances, in conjunction with the almost total want of accommodation in the Church, for the mass of the poorer orders, (until within the last three or four years) tended, in no ordinary degree, to cherish vice and ignorance, and a total apathy to religion, and, indeed, to improvement of any kind. One essential step towards the amelioration of a Parish so circumstanced, seemed to be the providing accommodation for the poorer orders in the Church. A *free* gallery was, accordingly, erected at the suggestion, and through the exertions of the last Incumbent; which, although by no means adequate to supply the wants of the Parish, has proved a material aid. The education of the children was obviously the next step, which

afforded any prospect of success. By giving them religious instruction, and training them to habits of due observance of the Lord's day, and attendance at Church, it was hoped that many of them would not only be rescued from the ignorance and irreligion which surrounded them, but that they might be made the means of bringing a beneficial influence to bear on their parents and relatives, whose habits had become such as to make them scarcely accessible by other means. With this view, a Sunday-school was established, and subsequently, an Infant-school by way of nursery and preparation, for it. In addition to this, the several dames' and other schools in the Parish, were regularly visited by the Clergyman, for the purpose of securing due attention to the teaching of the Church Catechism, and of watching over the progress of the children in it. By these means religious instruction was, in some measure, advanced among the mass of the children, and the way cleared for the adoption of your plan of Catechising in Church; which, before, would have been, if not impracticable, at least much less interesting and efficient, on account of the very small number of children, who were capable of any thing beyond the merest elementary instruction.

"In forming a plan for Catechising in the Church, it was of great importance to adapt it, not only to the instruction of the children themselves, but so as also to excite the notice of their parents and relatives, and to render it a vehicle of attractive instruction; and consequently of some general interest to a congregation. With these views a portion of the Church Catechism is given out to be got up during the week, together with some texts of Scripture, that are confirmatory or explanatory of the doctrines or precepts,

which it contains. The Sunday Collect is also committed to memory, and the children are encouraged to endeavour to prepare themselves to answer such questions as the matter it contains may suggest. In addition to these, the Gospel for the day is learnt or read over by the children; a certain number of verses by each, (several of them voluntarily get up the whole) and they are required to state the incidents recorded in it; the doctrines or precepts it teaches; the promises or threatenings it holds forth, &c.; and to quote the references it may contain, on any of the above particulars, to the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Tickets of merit are distributed publicly in Church, at the conclusion of the Catechising, to those who have answered best; and a certain number of these entitle their possessors to a Bible, New Testament, or Prayer-book, or some other suitable gift, which is also bestowed publicly. The Sunday-school is now so regulated as to be in every respect preparatory for the above plan of Catechising in Church, which is held out, and is considered by the children in a remarkable degree, as a great distinction and privilege to be attained to.

"If it be now asked, what have been the effects of this plan? It is answered, First, It has more than doubled the numbers at the Sunday-school. Secondly, The order and discipline among the children have been greatly improved; and are now maintained with a degree of ease before unknown; in consequence of the value attached to the Catechising in Church, both by children and parents, and the desire to merit the distinction of being admitted to it. Thirdly, It has attracted a respectable congregation in the afternoon, when very few attended before. Fourthly, It has excited many among the poorer classes (of which seve-

ral striking proofs have occurred) to endeavour to assist their children in preparing themselves, as well for the Catechising in the Church, as for the examinations in the school; a circumstance which cannot fail to prove highly beneficial, and of which there have been already proofs, especially in the attendance of many poor parents, and others, on divine worship, who formerly, very much, if not altogether, neglected it. Fifthly, It is evidently working a great improvement in the general behaviour of the children during the week, probably from the feeling, that the eyes of the public are more particularly fixed on them, in consequence of their appearing at the Catechising in Church, and also, it may be hoped, in consequence of the instruction they have there received. These are plain facts, which admit not of being doubted; and which fully bear out the expectations entertained by you, with regard to the utility of public Catechising in Church, if judiciously managed, and vigorously pursued. *Its* influence may be made to operate where a Clergyman's preaching never, perhaps, reaches; and where his advice and admonitions can be heard only on an occasional visit, and will then be heard too often only to be speedily forgotten. *It* operates upon parents through a channel which remains open, when every other is, perhaps, shut—*through their feelings for their children.* *It* forms the most effectual check to dissent; and if it were generally adopted, and well conducted, would, if I may venture to state my humble opinion, most powerfully extend the influence and usefulness of the Church *among the mass of the people than any other expedient that could be devised*"

CONCLUSION.

My Lord, I have now come to a termination of my proposed task. The system which I have adopted in your diocese, will, I trust, be continued by my successor, and I take leave of the district, with an earnest hope, that the beneficial results of a plan originating in your Lordship's Charge, will be of a lasting nature. The experiment has been tried, and fully stated; and my object will be as fully attained, if any persons who entertain low views concerning the duty of Catechising, or if any, whose practice does not correspond with their proper estimate of its importance, shall be induced to give their serious attention to the subject.

A service, which has been sanctioned by the example of the primitive Church, and of early reformed Churches: which has been enjoined by the Canons and Rubrics, and recommended by the most distinguished divines of our Establishment, which has been adopted by the Roman Catholics, and exercised by Protestant congregations of every name and sect throughout the Christian world, cannot but be practicable, instructive, and lovely in itself. "For, however individuals and societies may have differed in all other points, on the utility and necessity of Catechising all have agreed.—Europeans, Asiatics, and Africans, Greeks and Latins, Papists and Protestants, Lutherans and Calvinistics."* Wherever, therefore, it has been discontinued, the blame must rest upon individuals, whose duty it is to embrace every means, which the Church sets forth, of explaining its doctrines, and extending its influence.

At the present crisis, when the Church of England has

* Mant.

descended from her vantage ground, and declared her willingness to depend upon her moral strength—the purity of her Creed—the strictness of her discipline—the attachment of her supporters—and the fidelity of her ministers, for maintenance and ascendancy, there is a louder demand than ever for pastoral exertion in every branch of her ordinances. It will no longer suffice to talk of attachment to the Establishment, to write in its defence, or to controvert the arguments of its adversaries. Ours must be the persuasive reasoning of effective ministry. We must find our way to the hearts of the people, by exercising every duty which the Church imposes, as a test of usefulness and sincerity. The Dissenters boldly measure strength with us; the Roman Catholics openly menace and oppose us—they argue with us, they challenge us to a contest of words, and to a comparison of professional activity. But as long as we are vigilant and true to ourselves we have nothing to fear. Our former triumphs have been achieved by a lively zeal in the diffusion of light and knowledge, by guiding the public mind in the search of truth, and by taking the lead in all pursuits that conduct to it. But having, by the blessing of God obtained our pre-eminence, in part at least, by promoting national education, and religious inquiry, we must now preserve our station by personally superintending their progress, not only in Schools, and among individuals, but in the face of the congregation.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obliged

And faithful servant,

William Stephen Gilly.

May 1, 1828.

If you would have united and prosperous parishes, affectionate to yourselves, and devoted to your Redeemer —if you would enjoy the blessed satisfaction to see your spiritual children walking in the truth, and to meet them joyful and happy at the judgment of the great day, never lose sight of your duty to the lambs of the flock of Christ--the duty of thorough personal catechetical instruction.

Bishop Ives.

APPENDIX.

Nothing can be more strongly conclusive of the advantages which arise out of a system, where instruction is imparted to children, through examinations in Scripture, and in elementary knowledge, than the Reports which arrive in this country from India. When Bishop Heber declared "THE STRENGTH OF THE CHRISTIAN CAUSE IN INDIA LIES HERE," he was speaking of the Missions in Tanjore, where well-conducted schools, for the diffusion, in the first place of European, and ultimately of Christian Knowledge, are prominent among the means employed of enlightening the natives.

"I can assure the Society," says the Rev. Thomas Robinson, secretary to the Calcutta District Committee, addressing himself to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, "*that their native schools in Bengal hold out most encouraging prospects of success in converting the heathen to our holy faith.* I have visited these seminaries, and am satisfied that no human means can be so effectual in sapping the foundation of idolatry as they are.

The work may not immediately be followed by brilliant results, but there can be no doubt of the ultimate effect. Prejudice and alarm are rapidly subsiding, and difficulties which a few years ago presented a formidable barrier, are now unknown. We are at liberty to introduce the Scriptures and other religious books without a murmur. The word of God is taught daily; the Lord's Prayer is com-

mitted to memory, whilst treatises, calculated to convey useful knowledge, are received and learnt with avidity."

The following extracts from Reports of proceedings in India,* relative to hopes entertained of reaching the hearts of the population at large, through the young, will not be thought foreign to the question discussed in this volume. We may argue from the unconverted heathen abroad, to the nominal professors of Christianity at home, and expect the same results to follow.

"Each succeeding despatch, and every fresh arrival from the East furnish accumulated evidence to prove that education, and education alone, can overcome the prejudices of the Heathen, and prepare the way for the reception of Christianity. And when this fact is understood in Europe as completely as it appears to be understood in India, the Society may expect those important additions to its Native School Fund, which will enable it to answer the purposes for which it was formed."—*Report of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*, 1826, p. 27.

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* Similar expectations are indulged in another part of the world upon the same principle.

"Besides the model schools at Bridge Town, the Bishop of Barbados has adopted a plan for the general instruction of the black population throughout his diocese. He proposes to appoint one or more catechists in every parish, whose especial duty it will be to instruct the slaves, under the direction of the Clergy, and with the permission of their respective masters. His Lordship has been so fortunate as to procure the services of several highly respectable persons in the situation of catechists; and the system is undoubtedly calculated to communicate religious knowledge, both to the adult and to the child, with greater rapidity and greater regularity than any that had been previously proposed."—*Report of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*, 1826, p. 31.

"Stimulated by these encouraging assurances, the Society will continue to give its most earnest attention to the increase and maintenance of native schools. The liberal provision now made by the Indian Government for the literary instruction of its subjects, seems to point out the communication of religious knowledge as the peculiar field for the operation of the Society."—*Society's Report of* 1827, p. 29.

"At Bombay, to which a Missionary has now been appointed by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, there has been a considerable increase in the number of children educated in the Native Schools; a large supply of books has been requested; a large remittance in payment for former supplies has been received: and it is hoped that Christianity will soon be introduced into the schools in this Presidency in the same unobtrusive and effectual manner which has been already adopted in the neighbourhood of Calcutta.

"In Ceylon, where the number of native Christians has long been considerable, and where nothing seems to be wanted but an improved and extensive system of schooling, the plan suggested by Bishop Heber for the education of native teachers, has been unavoidably interrupted by his death. But so valuable a suggestion will not be lost sight of."—*Society's Report of* 1827, p. 32.

"In these schools the Scriptures are read as a book of elementary instruction, without opposition from the natives, or any appearance of dislike. Here, it would seem, *a great door, and effectual*, is opened to the preaching and reception of the Gospel. For it may reasonably be hoped that many, whose minds have been thus seasoned in early

life with the words of truth and soberness, will see, when they grow up to manhood, the folly and wickedness of their popular creed and superstitions; will listen with gladness to those messengers of Christ who propound to them the truths, and ply them with the lessons of godliness, to which they had been accustomed in their childhood; will renounce the errors and idols of their forefathers, and become sincere and willing converts to our pure and holy religion. Under these convictions of their tendency to advance the good work of conversion, a separate fund has been formed for their support. And the Society entertains a sanguine hope that, under your protection, they may, through God's blessing upon the instruments which he vouchsafes to employ, serve to promote the knowledge of the Gospel, and to extend the boundaries of the kingdom of heaven.—*From the Bishop of Gloucester's Valedictory Address to the Bishop of Calcutta, Society's Report of* 1827, p. 91.

"Six schools have been established in different parts of the city, (Benares), containing about 240 boys: in these schools, after the first books, the Gospels are read, and the treatise on Geography in Hinduwee printed by the School-Book Society. The streets of Benares being mostly very narrow, the boys assemble in long *verandahs, and the passers-by see and hear all that takes place:* this, though unfavourable for the purposes of a school, yet causes what the boys read to be heard by many, *and sometimes a hundred people or upwards will crowd around while the boys are examined in the previous week's exercises*, and their knowledge is diffused."—*Report of the Church Missionary Society*, 1827, p. 114.

The Calcutta Committee gives the following account of an examination of the schools:—

"On the 23d of April, a general examination was held of all the schools, previous to the Annual Meeting of the Committee. About sixty attended, from seven years old and upwards. The business of the day commenced with the third chapter of Galatians, read by one of the elder boys in Hindoostanee, and a Hindostanee prayer by Mr. Wilkinson, in which the Christian boys joined, the teachers and other boys attending in a very orderly manner. The different classes were then examined in an Elementary Catechism composed by Mr. Wilkinson, the Assembly's Catechism, and Watts' Catechism of Scripture Names, various Native Class-books, the Hindee, Oordoo and Persian Testaments, the Pentateuch in Oordoo, and the Persian. One boy repeated a Poem of considerable length, on the Being and Attributes of God; and all performed very well with reference to their ages and periods of attendance. But what appeared to give most general satisfaction, was the performance of a class of six boys, (two from the Seminary, and four from the Central School,) who read various passages from the New Testament, Pentateuch, and Psalms, in Persian and Hindee. The feeling and intelligent manner in which they delivered their various portions, contrasted with the formal drawl so generally exhibited by native readers—*the readiness, accuracy, and facility with which they referred to different Scriptures bearing on the subject of their Lecture, particularly from* Psalm viii. *to the interpretatory passage in* Matthew xxi. *and* Hebrews ii.—*and the good sense and correctness with which they answered the various questions proposed*

to them, could not fail to excite mingled gratification and surprise in the minds of all who considered how lately they had come under this species of instruction. The interest also taken in the Lecture by the native teachers, and their inquiries respecting passages of which an explanation was offered, could not but be highly pleasing." —*Report of the Church Missionary Society*, 1827, p. 121.

"I sent out the schoolmaster last Sunday while the bell was ringing, to those who lived near, to invite them to come; but they would not: they asked what profit they should get by going to hear a sermon. *Finding that no adults attended the services on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, I dispensed with preaching, and now read the prayers, and catechise the children on the history of the Bible and the leading truths of Christianity: by beginning these services an hour before the usual time of closing the school, the attendance of most of the children is secured; for though they are not compelled to remain, yet they generally do*—that is, the Cingalese boys on the Wednesday, and the Portuguese on the Thursday. Several also of the Headmen's sons, who come to school to learn English, are, by this means, brought to engage in Christian worship, who would not venture to come on the Sunday for the express purpose: in this way it may be hoped that some good may be effected—that their prejudices against our religion will, in time, wear away—and that the truths of the Gospel, becoming familiar to them, will, through the blessing of God, enlighten their minds: they will not kneel with the other children at prayers, but they do not object to take a book and join in the service."—*Report of the Church Missionary Society*, 1827, p. 149.

Of the schools generally, Mr. Ward writes—

"They are all visited twice, and in some cases three times, a week, by our young people; which, together with our own visits, will be productive, I trust, of a gradual improvement in the rising generation. We have never before possessed the means which we now do, for the accomplishment of this important object."—*Ibid.* p. 150.

It is not too much to say, that, next to an established liturgy, and beyond all prescribed confessions of faith, the single ordinance of catechetical instruction has been, under Providence the great stay and support, throughout Christendom, of orthodox unwavering catholicity.

Bishop Jebb.

Postscript,

BY THE AMERICAN EDITOR.

The purpose with which this re-print has been undertaken will be fully answered if it shall serve to extend the increasing attention which is now attracted towards the plan of public catechising, and to establish more widely a just and partial conviction of the great importance of that ancient institution. The success which shall attend its adoption in any case will be mainly dependent, under God, upon *the pastoral interest*. As to the duty of bringing up the children of the Church "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," there will be no difference of opinion. The only point to be decided is, the most effectual mode. If the test of experience be followed, the decision will be easily established. A chief obstacle to its adoption is the apprehension, commonly met with, of failure in the attempt. There is a supposed necessity of some peculiar fitness for the work which all cannot attain. Doubtless there will be different degrees of facility and different degrees of success in this, and every other human enterprize. But because all preachers are not eloquent alike, are not all to preach? The conviction is established in the author's mind, after much reflection and experience, that a high degree of ex-

cellence is much more generally attainable in catechising than in preaching. The saying often quoted, is not lost sight of, that "a boy may preach, but it requires a man to catechize." Allowance is first to be made for a fair measure of proverbial exaggeration in the antithesis here stated. For the rest, *experience* makes the difference. "Docendo docemur." The catechist *will* learn to catechise. Only let him have *long* patience. If there be a motto for *him*, better than any other, it is Isaiah's—"precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little." For the method of catechising, it will vary—the Church catechism being the basis—with every variety of character and circumstance. No course that could be delineated would suit all. A specimen of the course pursued, with great advantage, by the present writer, is in preparation for the press—"the Church Catechism analyzed, and proved by Scripture." After all, it will be no more than "HINTS FOR CATECHISING."

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